Mozart'S Operas: A Critical Study

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Edward Joseph Dent

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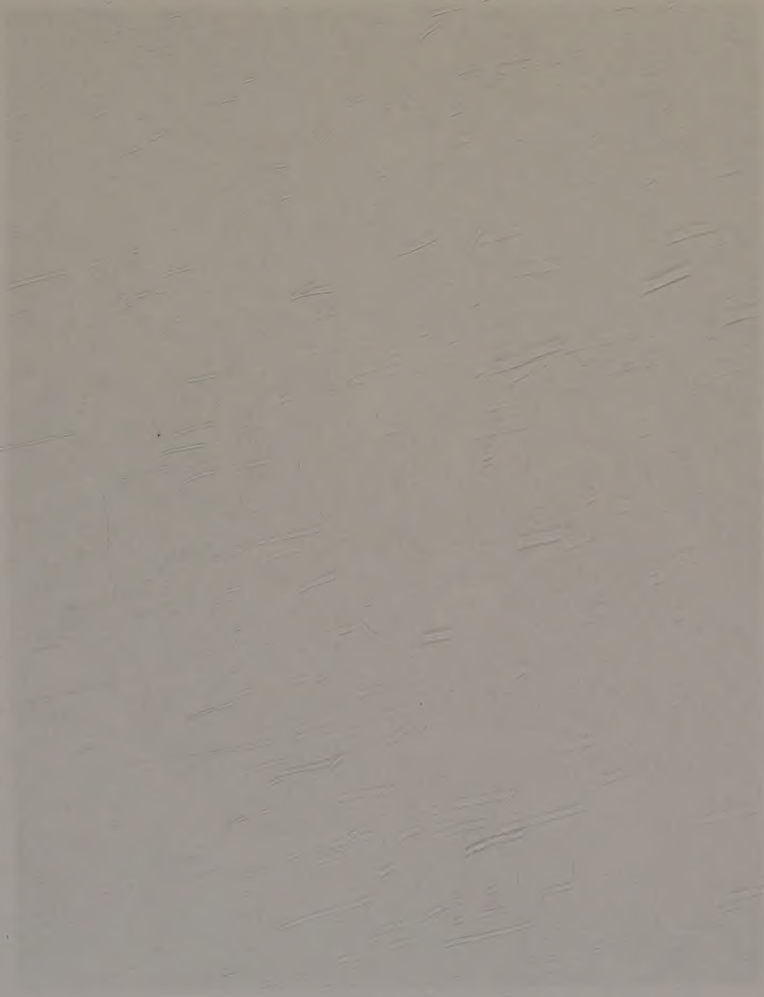
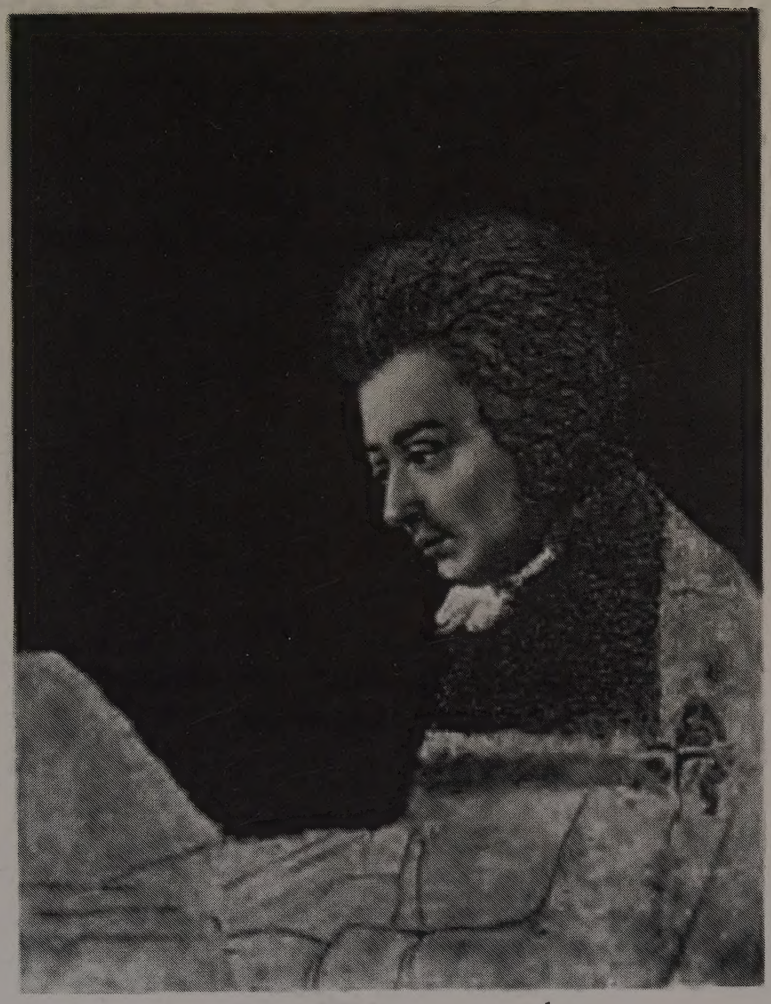
MOZART'S OPERAS





Wolfgang Amade Mozart

from an unfinished portrait

Jacob Lange painted in 1791

MOZART'S OPERAS

A CRITICAL STUDY

BY

EDWARD J. DENT

AUTHOR OF "ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI, HIS LIFE AND WORKS"

WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS AND NUMEROUS MUSICAL EXAMPLES

UNIV. OF ALBERTA

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TO

E. S. P. HAYNES

PREFACE

THIS book has been written with a double purpose: first, to present Mozart's principal operas as still living works to modern audiences; and, secondly, to draw from them illustrations of certain points of view from which music in general and opera in particular may be considered. These ideas have in the present work received no more than a summary indication, and I hope later on to find an opportunity of treating them more in detail. The first chapter deals mainly with principles of musical appreciation. Chapter II gives a survey of Mozart's early operas and his relation to his century, after which the more important operas are discussed at greater length. I have been careful in each case to give an account of the plot in as concise a form as possible. Quotations of music from Mozart's operas have as a rule been avoided, since cheap editions are easily available, but an exception has been made in favour of "Idomeneo," since that work is comparatively little known, even to Mozart enthusiasts. On the other hand, a number of examples have been given from the works of Mozart's contemporaries, which are for the most part extant only in manuscript or in early printed editions. The chapters on "Die Zauberflöte" were published

in 1911 in the form of a pamphlet[1] issued in connection with the performances of that opera given at Cambridge; they have since then been considerably revised.

For permission to reproduce portraits and other illustrations I am indebted to the kindness of Herr J. E. Engl, curator of the Mozart Museum at Salzburg, Professor Max Friedlaender (Berlin), Dr. Max von Portheim (Vienna),[2] Mr. W. Barclay Squire, Professor K. J. V. Steenstrup (Copenhagen), and the Council of the Royal Dublin Society. For information and assistance of various kinds I have to thank Lady Ball, Mr. A. T. Bartholomew, Mrs. Burkitt, Dr. Foord (Librarian of the Royal Dublin Society), Mr. E. Ph. Goldschmidt, Mr. A. S. F. Gow, Dr. Edgardo Maddalena (Vienna), Dr. E. Mandyczewski (Vienna), Mr. R. J. Moss (Registrar of the Royal Dublin Society), Mlle. Pereyra (Paris), Fräulein Henriette von Portheim (Prague), Mr. Edward Speyer, Mrs. Spottiswoode and Dr. Hans Volkmann (Dresden). My sincerest thanks are also due to Mr. Lawrence Haward, whose careful criticism of the book, both in manuscript and in proof, has been of the greatest value to me. Lastly, I must express my sense of gratitude to many friends who in various ways have helped me to understand Mozart. To name them is impossible, and some, I fear, would be little pleased at the opinions which I have expressed

[1] *Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute": its History and Interpretation*, Cambridge, 1911.

[2] Dr. von Portheim also possesses original silhouettes of Schikaneder and his wife which are to be reproduced in Dr. Rudolf Ludwig's *Schattenrisse aus Alt-Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1912).

in the course of this book. I will mention therefore only the immediate instigators of it, namely, those who took part in the Cambridge performances of "The Magic Flute," and him to whom I owe my first appreciation of Mozart's essential greatness—Mr. Oscar Browning.

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MOZART'S OPERAS AND OTHER DRAMATIC WORKS

(MOZART born 27 January 1756)

Title	*Place and Date of Production*
Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebotes	*Salzburg, Lent* 1767
Apollo et Hyacinthus	*Salzburg,* 13 *May* 1767
Bastien und Bastienne	*Vienna* 1768
La finta semplice	*Salzburg* 1769
Mitridate, re di Ponto	*Milan,* 26 *December* 1770
Ascanio in Alba	*Milan,* 17 *October* 1771
Il sogno di Scipione	*Salzburg, May* 1772
Lucio Silla	*Milan,* 26 *December* 1772
La finta giardiniera	*Munich,* 13 *January* 1775
Il re pastore	*Salzburg,* 23 *April* 1775
Zaide	(*unfinished—composed about* 1780)
Thamos, König in Aegypten	*Salzburg,* 1779 *or* 1780
Idomeneo, re di Creta	*Munich, January* 1781
Die Entführung aus dem Serail	*Vienna,* 16 *July* 1782
L'oca del Cairo	(*unfinished—composed in* 1783)
Lo sposo deluso	(*unfinished—composed in* 1783)
Der Schauspieldirektor	*Vienna,* 7 *February* 1786
Le nozze di Figaro	*Vienna,* 1 *May* 1786
Don Giovanni	*Prague,* 29 *October* 1787
Così fan tutte	*Vienna,* 26 *January* 1790
La clemenza di Tito	*Prague,* 6 *September* 1791
Die Zauberflöte	*Vienna,* 30 *September* 1791

(MOZART died 5 December 1791)

MOZART'S OPERAS

CHAPTER I

PRINCIPLES OF OPERA

An eminent living composer was once heard to remark that there were only three really great writers of operas—Mozart, Wagner and Verdi. There are many others whose dramatic works still hold the stage. Gluck, Beethoven, Boito, Moussorgsky and Tchaikovsky had personalities great enough to dominate the medium in which they worked, although they never had a complete mastery of it, and other writers, such as Rossini, Auber, Meyerbeer and Charpentier, had so perfect a mastery of their own technique that their operas are always effective and successful, even though the personality behind them is not of the first rank. Even such masterpieces of their respective styles as "Der Freischütz" and "Carmen" can hardly suffice to place their composers on a level with the three giants of musical drama. That Wagner and Verdi should have attained a high place in the repertories of all countries where opera is cultivated is less remarkable than that Mozart should have done so. Wagner and Verdi have only just arrived at being classics: there are plenty of people still living who can remember the days when Verdi was thought vulgar and Wagner revolutionary. We shall have

to wait a little, though not for many years, to see whether audiences in general as well as trained musicians can continue to be really moved by their poetry and passion, in spite of those conventions characteristic of each of them which have already caused their less inspired contemporaries to fall into oblivion. With Mozart the case is different. The oldest opera-goer cannot recollect a time when Mozart was not a classic. The aged think of him as a respected classic, the elderly as a classic much over-rated, while the present generation has rediscovered him with a whole-hearted enthusiasm. This perhaps is not altogether true of Germany, where a subscription to the local opera is as much a mark of respectability as a pew at the parish church in this country, so that Mozart's operas are no more a fit subject for either enthusiasm or criticism than are the epistles of St. Paul.[1] But in England, and I believe in France also, there certainly is now beginning to flourish an intense and genuine delight in those masterpieces of musical drama which our elders in their first reverential adoration of Bach and Brahms regarded as trivial and insincere.

It is perhaps fortunate for us in England that we have no established tradition of Mozartian performance. There is no opera of Mozart's that does not imperatively demand the most intelligent study and the most assiduous rehearsal. On those rare occasions when "Figaro" or "Don Giovanni" is presented by singers of the first rank on the stage

[1] According to a *Musikbuch aus Oesterreich*, ed. J. Reitler, Vienna and Leipzig, 1912, the number of Mozart performances at the Vienna Imperial Opera during the season 1911–12 was three—"Die Zauberflöte" twice and "Don Giovanni" once.

of our national opera-house, there is indeed little inducement to an audience to discover in the composer the adroitest of dramatists, the most delicate of psychologists. Yet such performances, bad as they are, do less harm than the painstaking misinterpretations which have now become stereotyped on most German stages. What has kept alive the love of Mozart in this country has been the performances in English given by travelling companies in the provinces, by singers who, singing in their own language, have been forced to understand the meaning of the words, and having never been brought up to regard Mozart as a national heritage to be accepted and not criticized, have done their best to interpret him by the light of common sense.

The light of common sense is indeed one that no musician, and least of all the dramatic musician, can afford to do without, in spite of the prevailing idea that opera is in its very essence the contradiction of all that is logical, reasonable, and human. It is not, however, all-sufficing, for opera is a form of art that has pursued its own way for some three centuries, accumulating in the course of those years a strange and miscellaneous growth of conventions. Some have been discarded at different times, some have remained in a more or less modified form, and one test of a really great opera will always be the question how far it has succeeded in turning the conventions of the day to the best account.

Another test, and one which it is often difficult to apply until the lapse of many years has taught us to apply it subconsciously, is the test of musical reasonableness. To think musically, to reason in music, is the first step towards any kind of musical

appreciation; and it therefore seems desirable to take this opportunity of considering for a moment what is really meant by the appreciation of music. The digression is justifiable, and might even be regarded as obligatory, since a writer on music who wishes to be taken seriously is in duty bound to make his principles of criticism clear to his readers at the outset.

Let us simplify the problem for the moment by disregarding all vocal music, since instrumental music is both in quantity and quality sufficiently important to stand by itself as a normal type of the rest. Most writers on music, we find, tend to divide instrumental works into two classes, which are generally called "absolute music," or "abstract music," and "programme-music" respectively. I do not wish to defend or condemn the nomenclature, and employ it merely for convenience. Most writers, moreover, seem to be definitely partisans either of the one type or of the other. The enthusiasts for "absolute" or "abstract" music condemn all music which sets out to be descriptive, and the other party despise all non-descriptive music as being mere geometrical patterns in sound, void of all human interest. But since neither party can be content with the exclusive possession of Brahms on the one side or Liszt on the other, there is a good deal of controversy as to the interpretation of a large number of works which both parties are willing to accept as undoubted masterpieces. The adherents of "absolute music" generally regard Beethoven's symphonies, for instance, as their exclusive property; but their adversaries, in default of any definite material interpretation authorized by Beethoven himself, feel obliged to translate those works, if not into descriptions of visual objects, at

least into such terms of poetical ideas as can be expressed in a literary form.

The party of "programme" have certainly a very strong argument in the recorded utterances of many great composers to the effect that "they always had a picture in their mind when composing." I am quite prepared, if they wish, to admit the hypothesis that no great musical work was ever written without the composer having had a picture in his mind. But the numerous experiments that have been made on audiences have shown clearly enough that practically no piece of music conveys its original picture clearly and unmistakably to every hearer in the way that a painting or poem presents its subject to those who see or read it. There are, as a matter of fact, a certain number of fairly definitely established descriptive conventions, which may be seen at their plainest in the minor works of Mendelssohn and Schumann; but even these are not always unmistakable—witness the fact that a certain "Song without Words" of Mendelssohn is known to some people as a "Spinning Song" and to others as "The Bees' Wedding"—and even when unmistakable, they do not really describe things with which we are ourselves directly familiar, but only things which we have from childhood been accustomed to find musically described in those terms, either in the works of Mendelssohn and Schumann, or in the innumerable schoolroom pieces written by publishers' hacks, whom it would be an undeserved compliment to call their imitators.

It is interesting to find that Mendelssohn himself very much resented titles being given to the "Songs without Words." There is a letter of his extant which is worth quoting, as it gives us a clue to funda-

mental principles. A certain Marc-André Souchay had written to ask him the meaning of the "Songs without Words," and had even ventured to suggest certain interpretations himself. Here is Mendelssohn's reply:—

"BERLIN, *Oct.* 15, 1842.

"There is so much talk about music and so little really said. My belief is, in fact, that words are insufficient for the purpose, and if I ever found that they were sufficient, I should ultimately never write any more music. People generally complain that music is capable of so many interpretations; they are so uncertain what they ought to understand by it, whereas everybody would understand words. To me it is just the other way. And it is not merely whole sentences, but single words too that seem to me capable of so many interpretations, so indefinite, so unintelligible in comparison with real good music, which fills one's soul with a thousand better things than words. Music that I love expresses to me thoughts, not too *indefinite*, but too *definite*, to put into words. And so I find that in all attempts to translate these thoughts (into words) there is something legitimate, but in all of them something unsatisfactory, and that is what I feel about your attempts. This, however, is not your fault, but the fault of the words, which cannot help themselves. If you ask me what *I* had in my mind, I can only say "just the song as it stands." And if I did in one case or another have a definite word or words in my mind, still I would rather not tell anybody what they were, because a word does not mean the same to any one person as it does to another, because only the song itself can say the same thing to one person as to another, can

awaken the same feelings in him—feelings which, however, cannot be expressed on every occasion by the same words."

Goethe too says in the fourth part of *Dichtung und Wahrheit:* "I had already perceived only too clearly that no man understands another, that no man attaches the same meaning to a given word as another does." [1]

I quote this letter at length not because Mendelssohn's opinion is more valuable than that of any other composer, but because it is evidently the opinion of a man accustomed to reason things out and to express his thoughts in the clearest possible language. One might collect any number of oracular utterances from Handel, Beethoven and others to prove that their music was intended to be descriptive; but one would have some difficulty in proving that they were giving a really accurate account of the psychological process of composition.

We find ourselves confronted with the fundamental question, what is music? The best answer that has yet been given is M. Jules Combarieu's definition: "La musique est l'art de penser avec les sons." [2] The usual attempts to explain the meaning of music on the analogy of painting or other arts are merely confusing and misleading. The art which comes nearest to music is naturally the art of poetry, but it must be clearly understood that poetry and music are now entirely separate things, although in

[1] I have translated the letter afresh from the German, as Lady Wallace's version is not always quite clear. I do not know whether the note about Goethe is part of Mendelssohn's original letter, or whether it was added by his brother, who edited his correspondence for publication.

[2] Jules Combarieu, *La musique, ses lois, son évolution.* Paris, 1907.

the remote past they may have been undifferentiated. It is of little importance to settle which of the two first came into existence. Primitive man experienced certain feelings, and desired to express them by means of his voice; as his feelings became more complex and he himself more skilful in conveying them to others, he distinguished speech from song, and employed each for its special purpose. That music has developed continuously into what we now possess is surely proof that it has fulfilled an important human need, and that men have always experienced in a greater or less degree certain feelings for which music, and music alone, can provide expression. Music has in fact become a separate language subject only to its own laws of construction, and available only for the expression of its own ideas.

When we first begin to learn a foreign language, French for example, we are taught to regard certain French words as being exact equivalents of certain English words. For a long time too, we habitually think in English, and laboriously translate that English—which is not our thought, but only the arbitrary symbol of it—into French. A moment arrives eventually at which we are able actually to think in French, and as we make further progress with the language, we find that there are many French words and expressions which we cannot translate into English, because they represent ideas so essentially French that a normal Englishman does not understand them, and consequently has no words to express them. The better we know French, the more we shall be conscious of the difference between the French and English mentalities; and supposing that we study other languages as well, the

further we go geographically from our own country, the more impossible it will become to translate any ideas except those which are common to all human beings, civilized or uncivilized. Yet we have no doubt that Chinese, for instance, is a perfectly reasonable language, adapted to the needs of those who live in China. It is then only a short step further to conceive of a language of music, logical and adapted to quite complex needs for those who understand it, yet absolutely untranslatable into English, because the language of music and the language of daily life deal with two different worlds which have practically nothing in common.

Most people have without study picked up a rough smattering of the language of music, as one picks up a rough smattering of French by living in France. But the language of music is less consciously acquired than French, because no one ever finds himself in a position where an understanding of music is an absolute necessity for social intercourse. Similarly a man might go through life happily enough without ever discovering what swimming means. He knows that walking is the usual mode of progression on dry land, and that up to a certain depth walking is practicable in water, though not always very convenient. But if he is to progress in deeper water, he must learn a totally different method of locomotion, a method too which it is impossible for him to learn completely on dry land, and which is absolutely useless except in the water.

There is no short cut to the real understanding of music, any more than there is to a knowledge of a foreign language, or to a mastery of the art of swimming. The process involves the acceptance of

a definite attitude of mind to begin with, and constant, indeed lifelong, practice in the element itself. Nor have I any argument with which to demonstrate that this knowledge is worth acquiring, any more than I could find arguments to demonstrate to a casual Frenchman that English was worth studying for the sake of understanding what our poets have written. If he viewed English as many people seem to view music, he might say that he knew how to pronounce the words and liked the sound, but that he was convinced that, being totally ignorant of English grammar or syntax, he understood the essential poetry of Shakespeare a great deal better than any born Englishman.

The first effect of music (I mean the first in time) upon us is a purely physiological stimulus, which affects us merely in the same sort of way as a pleasant (or unpleasant) taste in the mouth, a pleasant (or unpleasant) touch to the skin. There are possibly some people whose appreciation of music never gets beyond this, and although the amount and character of the physiological stimulus varies in different cases, the most cultivated musician is always susceptible to it, and if he be honest will admit that it forms an essential part, though by no means the only part, of his pleasure in music. Between this appreciation and the intellectual appreciation of which I have just spoken there is a borderland, which for many people is their principal musical territory. They feel subconsciously that there is something in music beyond the physiological stimulus of mere loudness or softness and of pleasant or unpleasant quality of tone, but they are unable to analyse it logically, and therefore fall back upon the nonsensical vapour-

ings which are sold for countless shillings and sixpences in our principal concert halls. They like to encourage themselves in the belief that this borderland is the domain of all noble emotions, and that beyond it there is only the arid desert of "mathematics." There are even composers—and composers of eminence too, more's the pity—who seem to hold the same belief, and to encourage it in their listeners. To them music is not a subject on which to use one's brains, but a sort of drug like chloral or *haschisch*. What would our opinion be of a foreigner who, understanding no English, had Shakespeare read aloud to him to send him to sleep, or George Meredith's poems to stimulate his passions? If these victims of the musical drug-habit would make up their minds to listen to music with the same amount of intellectual energy that they are willing to expend on such "relaxations" as chess or bridge, they would discover fairly soon that although they might not obtain quite the same emotional experiences, and might also have to revise their judgments as to the relative merits of various works, yet their appreciation of the essential poetry of great music, so far from being ruined, would on the contrary be deepened to an ever-increasing extent.

Yet there is no doubt whatever that most composers, especially at certain particular periods of musical history, have firmly believed that their function was to represent, if not material objects, at any rate definite emotions such as they were accustomed to describe in words. Nevertheless it is equally clear that composers have at all periods been subject to some indefinable musical instinct, which has caused them to write according to a more

or less permanent system of purely musical expression, independently of all their attempts at description. We have only to look at the music of the past three centuries to see that composers of whose greatness there can be no question make themselves utterly ridiculous when they attempt to be purely descriptive. Descriptive music may impress the generation for whom it is written, but history shows that it has no permanent value. Either it becomes childish, like the battle pieces of the old Italian organists, or else, like Handel's pictures of the plagues of Egypt, it obtains immortality by its sheer musical expressiveness, after its realism has long ceased to make any impression on us. The same thing applies to emotional description, though in a lesser degree. Composers have always been quite convinced, and their audiences too, that they were expressing such things as joy, grief, jealousy, despair and so forth in their music; but composers have as a rule been too much occupied with composition to analyse their own feelings with precision, or at any rate to express those feelings adequately in literary form, and audiences have in general been either too indifferent or too preoccupied with literary translation and too little conversant with the methods of musical reasoning to realize the true import of what they heard. Such emotions as we are accustomed to call by the names I have mentioned are in reality more complex than might appear; it is only a part of them that is expressible by name, and they are accompanied by a sort of emotional penumbra for which music may provide a better expression. We have only to bear in mind that those emotions, feelings, ideas, or whatever we call them, that are expressible only in music

are just as real and just as essential, although we have no names for them, as those which we can put into words.[1] A composer can therefore go some considerable way in presenting a character to us, because the "musical" side of the character is just as essential a part of his personality as the non-musical. An ideal opera, we might go on to say, would therefore be a drama constructed entirely upon the interaction of "musical" personalities. It is hardly to be expected, however, that an opera of this kind should be written, given the present condition of musical understanding; yet it is fairly true to say that the best operas are those which seem to transport us into a community of people whose personalities are of such a type that music is their normal and natural mode of self-expression. An opera is, as a matter of fact, a superposition of one drama upon another; and the difficulty of its construction is the difficulty of making the two dramas, the musical and the non-musical, coincide. The problem has been attacked in various ways. Sometimes, as in "Pelléas et Mélisande," the musical portion is reduced to an almost negligible quantity; in the great majority of operas the reverse is the case. The eighteenth century generally adopted a system of alternating the two; the nearest approach that has been made to a perfect union of both

[1] To be perfectly consistent, no commentary upon a musical work, other than a strictly technical analysis, could be written at all except in music itself. Such musical commentaries of varying value do of course exist in the shape of variations, fantasias, transcriptions, "meditations," &c., by one composer on the work of another. But for practical purposes a literary and yet not strictly technical commentary is useful, and in such a case the writer has to struggle with language as best he may, and hope that his reader will not put too precise a construction upon his interpretations.

elements is of course to be found in the mature work of Wagner. As might be expected, really effective opera employs all possible means. Its musical appeal must be physiological as well as intellectual, and there is bound to be much that belongs to the borderland between the two; the poetical side of the drama will exhibit an analogous variety of treatment. Indeed, the aim of a composer like Wagner, as it was the aim of the Florentine inventors of the form, and probably the aim of the great Greek tragedians as well, was to make poetry and music one and inseparable, as they were to primitive man. There are people who hold the opinion that the combination of music and drama is "a spoiling of two good things"; and it is true that in an opera both music and drama have to make some mutual concessions. But in the hands of Mozart, Wagner and Verdi, and indeed in the hands of many lesser composers, opera is not merely a superposition, even an accurate one, of one kind of drama upon another. The two dramas do not remain separate; they produce by their interaction something that was not there before, just as voices singing contrapuntally produce not merely separate and combinable melodies, but a new musical effect, harmony, as well.

Historians and writers have however generally failed to bear in mind that an audience, in order to appreciate a musical drama, must have a previous understanding of non-dramatic music. It is inevitable at all stages of musical development that the art should be subject to certain conventions, *i.e.* to certain tacit agreements as to modes of expression understood between composer and listener. When those agreements have become completely familiar,

critics and historians become aware of their existence, and describe them as "conventional"; in the meantime the composer and listener have tacitly agreed to take their old agreements for granted, and make new ones based on the pleasure of breaking them up. When the musician transfers his art from the chamber to the theatre, he is obliged to accept certain of these conventions in order to be intelligible to his listeners at all; but he has also the advantage that, being sure of his listener's having once accepted certain other conventions of an older type, he can play upon his mind with dramatic effect by deliberately disregarding them. This at any rate is the case when composer and listener are men of the same generation; but when the listener is junior to the composer by some hundred years and more, this question of conventions to be regarded or disregarded becomes more difficult, and demands a certain historical knowledge in order to ensure the formation of a satisfactory judgment.

The complaint is made with some bitterness that the best music is constantly suffocated by the enormous quantity of second-rate stuff that is continually being produced. This is, however, inevitable, and we must console ourselves as best we can with the thought that a great deal of the second-rate stuff is quite useful in helping the ignorant towards an appreciation of what is better. It depends so much on convention for its existence that it enables the listener easily to see which conventions are becoming "conventional," and which are still in force between him and the real leaders of musical thought. Second-rate music is a phenomenon not peculiar to our own time, and it is one of the depressing experiences of the musical historian that the course of no move-

ment can be traced without his saturating himself in the second-rate music of the period under study; it is, in fact, a necessary part of the attempt to live oneself into any given epoch of musical history, so that it is only by remaining in constant touch with the music of to-day that a historian can hope to maintain a balanced judgment under such trying conditions. Yet wearisome as it may be to wade through even half a dozen scores of operas by Mozart's contemporaries (and that must be a mild boredom compared with the boredom of having to see them performed!), the occupation is not unprofitable. For when we hear the music of a composer whose mode of expression is so remote from our own as is Mozart's, we inevitably tend to fasten on the externals of his music in the belief that they are his most vital characteristics. Those who have given some patient study to his contemporaries begin to realize that most of those features of Mozart's music which we are apt to consider so typically Mozartian are not Mozartian in the least, but are simply the common stock-in-trade of all the music-makers of the day.

There is no need to lower our estimation of Mozart on this account; it is just such a comparison of him with the now completely forgotten composers of his time that shows us how infinitely superior he was to them in all that constitutes genius. Yet he was never above learning from lesser men than himself. We shall see when we come to compare "Figaro" with Sarti's opera "I due litiganti" or "Don Giovanni" with Martin's "Cosa rara" how quick he was to observe what was effective in another man's work, and how it might be improved and developed. It will be the object of this book to help

the reader to an intelligent appreciation of those operas of Mozart which it is still possible to present on the modern stage, and this appreciation must be based partly on the normal outlook of us modern musicians, and partly on the outlook of the composer and his contemporaries, so far as it is possible for the historian to reconstruct it. With the intervening century and its opinions we need seldom concern ourselves. It was the Romantic movement, more than anything else, that misdirected several generations on the subject of Mozart. It was precisely that age of musical men of letters which almost destroyed pure musical thought in the attempt to express in terms of its own literature the music which belonged to a period of utterly different ideals. The romanticists enjoyed Mozart because they could not help it; but they corresponded in many cases to the type of modern amateur whose interest in music ends with Brahms. They are often leaders of thought in other branches of art, but as musicians they are content to be a generation behind their time, and do not see that the ideas which they are trying to read into Brahms or Mozart, as the case may be, are being better expressed all around them by the contemporary composers whom they consider decadent or unintelligible.

We must therefore begin by attempting to put ourselves back into the minds of those who first listened to Mozart's operas, and do our best to realize the point of view from which they regarded music in general. For this purpose it will be well to make a general survey of music in the eighteenth century, and observe how the tendencies of the age made themselves felt in Mozart's earliest experiments in dramatic composition.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY OPERAS

THE century into which Mozart was born was a century the music of which was dominated throughout by the influence of Italian opera. Serious-minded musicians are often inclined to regard all Italian music as trivial and all operatic tendencies as vicious, although the severity of their judgment is occasionally relaxed in favour of Monteverdi; and viewing the development of musical history less as chroniclers than as moralists, they have frequently presented their readers with a very one-sided account of the period. There is no need to quarrel with the consensus of opinion that has placed Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven on a higher level of greatness than Leo, Pergolesi, Jommelli, and Cimarosa; but it is most important to realise that the great Germans, however sincerely they may have felt that they were bringing about a reaction from the Italian supremacy, were all the time subconsciously expressing themselves in a musical language that was essentially Italian.

Vernon Lee has well pointed out[1] that "throughout the eighteenth century the evolution of the musical phrase, the evolution of what I should like to call *melodic form*, took place in Italy," and that "musical style, in its musical essentials, was unaltered by

[1] *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy.* Preface to the second edition, 1907.

Gluck's reforms." But it was not merely the characteristic shape of an eighteenth-century tune, whether in Germany or England, that was Italian, but the greater forms in which music was written. To treat of the sonata as if sonatas for the harpsichord and pianoforte could be completely separated in their evolution from all other kinds of music is absurd, even if the writer is considering keyboard technique apart from structural matters. There was hardly a single branch of the whole of eighteenth-century music of which it is not true to say, that composers over the greater part of musical Europe were trying to express in different forms and for different instruments what they had heard sung in the Italian opera. The constructive schemes, as well as the actual melodic phrases of all the classical sonatas, symphonies, concertos, &c., of the eighteenth century were derived in the main from the despised operatic aria, and the downfall of the old-fashioned opera together with the simultaneous rise of the symphony and sonata came about not so much owing to the alleged moral superiority of the Germans over the Italians, as owing to the increasing capacity of audiences on both sides of the Alps to appreciate longer and more developed compositions. The operatic aria (and under the heading of aria I include not only single songs, but duets, ensembles, and finales) was stretched to breaking-point: the burden, if not too great for the physical strength of the singers, was in almost all cases too great for the drama; we shall observe in Mozart's own operas how the drama occasionally suffers from a too symphonic, *i.e.* a too purely musical treatment of the setting. It was not until Mozart and Haydn had brought about a further development

of symphonic technique that certain symphonic conventions could be tacitly discarded, as being too well known to need observance, thereby enabling a new development to be initiated in the technique of opera.

This symphonic point of view in music was only obtained by climbing the ladder of Italian opera. The ladder once climbed, young Germany very characteristically kicked it down, and a later generation pretended that there never had been any Italian ladder there at all. But the eighteenth century could not be deceived in this way. The audiences had to follow the composers, and they could only do this by retaining the memory of the discarded Italian opera tradition; that was the convention, the agreement which for the moment had to be tacitly understood and taken for granted. This psychological relation of Italian opera to German instrumental music is a very difficult thing to explain in words, since it is something over and above the structural and etymological relation which can at least be written down in musical notes. It can only be said that the musician who thoroughly saturates himself with the spirit of Italian opera will thereby often obtain a new and illuminating outlook on the essential poetry of the instrumental music. We of the present day are surrounded on all sides not by the sound of Italian song, but by that of the pianoforte. Were it not that primitive human nature is fortunately too strong to be utterly crushed out of existence, we might even have forgotten what the human voice sounded like, and have accepted the sound of the pianoforte as the normal standard of musical tone. Now the pianoforte is the one instrument of serious importance (we may leave harps,

guitars, drums, bells and triangles out of consideration) which cannot sing, and which, despite all the ingenuity of manufacturers, never will be able to sing as long as it remains a pianoforte; and the intelligibility of the music written for it was dependent for a long time, and is indeed to some extent still dependent, on the memory which the listener retains of what he has heard sung at an earlier date. Chopin and Liszt wrote for audiences who were steeped in the recollection of Malibran singing Bellini; then as the art of both Malibran and Bellini faded into oblivion, listeners, having become accustomed to this new and in a way essentially deceptive form of music, gradually began to accept the platform pianist as a personality in his own right. He no longer appeals to our remembrance of song; he claims to create primary impressions for us, and we may very possibly live to see in our own century a development of music for other instruments—even for human voices—which will depend for its intelligibility upon our recollection, let us say, of Mr. Borwick playing Debussy. A still later generation may have discarded the pianoforte altogether, and future researchers will possibly maintain that it is only by a careful study of the deservedly forgotten pianoforte music of the twentieth century that we can arrive at a proper appreciation of those masterpieces which the really great men composed for—whatever the fashionable medium of the period may be.

Accordingly Mozart, when he appeared before his public in that capacity in which it most appreciated him, namely, as a virtuoso on the pianoforte, knew that the best way to express his individuality was to express on the instrument which he himself played

best the ideas which he could perhaps have placed in the mouth of a singer had there been any singer whose genius he could feel to be the equal of his own. Mr. Donald Tovey pointed out many years ago how the pianoforte concerto was derived structurally from the operatic aria; but what I wish to insist on here is that Mozart, and not only Mozart but all the composers of the period, had the operatic aria constantly before their imaginations, not as a dead scheme to be adequately expressed by some such convenient formula as "A_1 B_2 A_2 B_1 C+*Da capo*," but as the most passionately living language of the day, with the result that Mozart's concertos and similar works, such as the beautiful pianoforte *obbligato* to the aria "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" are carefully designed so as almost to produce on the hearer the illusion that the instrument is not a pianoforte but a singing voice. To this illusion there naturally contributes every little flourish, shake or cadence that is characteristic of the aria; and while the more obviously instrumental passages are nearly always transcriptions, as we should now call them, of vocal ideas, the flourishes, shakes and cadences which strike us moderns as conventional become integral parts of the design as soon as we have started our imagination on the track of that memory of Nancy Storace or Aloysia Lange which, the first listeners needed no biographical dictionary to recall for them.

It is in Mozart's concertos that we see the principle affirmed in its noblest manner; but before Mozart was born the principle was already universal. Austria, Germany and England were swarming with Italian musicians of all kinds, and not all of them such scoundrels as modern German

comic opera would represent them. Both literally and figuratively, Italian was the language of music; hardly a court was without its Italian opera, and there was hardly a place where Dr. Burney did not find Italian the most convenient medium of conversation. Even Paris succumbed at last to the charm of Italian comic opera, and London and Vienna were almost more important centres of Italian music than Venice and Naples.

Italian opera in the eighteenth century cannot be summed up in the person of Pergolesi and then dismissed, as many writers imagine. At any given moment there were various schools in Italy itself, and in any given school the lines of demarcation are sharp between different generations: Italian audiences were quick to appreciate what was new and quick to tire of it. Moreover, the men who were colonizing that "greater Italy" north of the Alps were themselves often subject to native influences. Italian was indeed the universal language of music, but that very fact made for a certain cosmopolitanism which became still more marked as the century proceeded; and of all cosmopolitan eighteenth-century musicians Mozart is the chief.

His fame as an infant prodigy had caused him to begin his travels at a very tender age. How far he was permanently susceptible to the various musical influences he experienced is difficult to estimate, owing to the abnormal precocity of his psychological development.[1] Moreover, the influences themselves

[1] The development of his genius in the first twenty-one years of his life has been studied in the minutest detail and with an extraordinarily wide knowledge of contemporary music by MM. T. de Wyzewa and G. de Saint-Foix in their book *W. A. Mozart, sa vie musicale et son œuvre de l'enfance à la pleine maturité*, 1756–77. Paris, 1912.

must be largely a matter of conjecture, since we have no definite record of every person that he met, or of every piece of music that he heard. But Leopold Mozart was indefatigable in showing off his son's talents to everybody within his reach, and seems also to have been extremely careful to keep the boy as closely as possible in touch with all the new music of the day; indeed, to us modern amateurs who have been trained from childhood on "the classics," and largely on the works of Mozart himself, his musical education seems curiously superficial. Leopold Mozart, although always held up to admiration as the most devoted of fathers, had a very disagreeable side to his character. He was a musical workman rather than an artist, and the way in which he regarded his son's abnormal gifts is made unpleasantly clear by a passage in a letter which he wrote on the subject of the journey to Italy projected in 1767. The performance of Wolfgang's opera "La finta semplice" at Vienna, a performance promised but never carried out, would, he thought, be a sufficiently public recognition of the boy's talent to make an impression on the Archbishop of Salzburg and induce him to give permission for the Italian tour on which Leopold had set his heart. Leopold had had enough of Salzburg: is he to sit there, he asks, and let himself and his children submit to the archbishop's whims till he is too old to undertake a journey, and "until Wolfgangerl has reached the age and the stature which will deprive his accomplishments of all that is marvellous?"

The musical profession had its shady side in the eighteenth century no less than in the twentieth, and no doubt Afflisio, the manager of the opera at Vienna,

was a thorough scoundrel; but if Leopold's letters are to deserve credit, there was hardly a musician in Vienna or anywhere else who was not a monster of jealousy and intrigue. We may be fairly sure that a man who could write with such unfailing bitterness, even of men whose characters are fortunately known to us from other sources, was sufficiently disagreeable in personal intercourse to encourage rather than disarm hostility from his brother musicians. Wolfgang was to be forced upon the world as a miraculous prodigy, and the iron was to be struck while it was hot; there was no reason to suppose that after he was grown up he would be anything more than a respectable professional musician like his father. Was it surprising that the men who were in possession of public favour should refuse to fall prostrate in admiration, or even to accept him as an equal? Burney, who had been in a very good position to judge of the boy's earlier attainments, had every reason to put faith in the letter of his anonymous Salzburg correspondent, who said of Wolfgang at sixteen, "If I may judge of the music which I heard of his composition, in the orchestra, he is one further instance of early fruit being more extraordinary than excellent."

At the age of eight he was in Paris writing harpsichord sonatas, which Leopold sent off at once to the engraver, so as to excite the jealousy of Schobert and the other Italianized Germans who were then fashionable in France; in London he was writing his first symphony to compete with Abel and J. C. Bach. He probably heard some of Rameau's music in Paris, if only owing to the friendly interest of Jelyotte, the great hero of Rameau's operas, and

he undoubtedly heard a good deal of Handel's music in England. But Leopold had no great opinion of Handel, and was better pleased to think that "Wolfgang at the age of eight knows all that could be expected of a man of forty." Apparently all that Leopold expected of a man of forty was that he should have enough technical skill to write successful and effective drawing-room music. It was indeed fortunate that he expected no more, for the child's health could scarcely have endured the strain of attempting to keep abreast with the serious music of his day, and still less could a twentieth-century child of genius survive the enormously increased nervous fatigue involved in the mere hearing, let alone the composition, of modern music.

We have only to read his letters from Italy to his sister to see how hard his father kept him at work, not only playing and listening, but composing as well. No wonder he complains of headaches and tired fingers, and repeats again and again that Italy is a country where one always wants to go to sleep! That he speaks of his own music in the most perfunctory manner is perhaps a good sign; he shows not the least consciousness of being a genius, although he takes it as a matter of course that he is always among grown-up musicians,[1] nor is there the least trace of nervous or emotional exhaustion in connection with music.

The first really strong and lasting musical impression that the child received was in all probability the influence of Manzuoli, a famous Italian singer, whom he often saw and heard in London. Manzuoli,

[1] He had at any rate one friend of his own age, Thomas Linley, whose name and features are familiar to all lovers of Gainsborough.

who although no longer young when he came to London, enjoyed an enormous popularity, was a frequent visitor to the Mozarts, and gave Wolfgang singing lessons. They met again in Milan in 1771, when Manzuoli took the leading part in his serenata "Ascanio in Alba." Mozart's letters show us not only that he was much attached to him, but also that he associated with his name a very definite sense of style. Along with Manzuoli must be mentioned another friend of Mozart's childhood, John Christian Bach, the completely Italianized youngest son of John Sebastian, known as the London Bach. He was one of the principal exponents of what was called the *galant* style—an essentially Italian instrumental style which was the result of a reaction against the severer manner of the Handelian period. It was a style which naturally appealed to a clever child like Wolfgang, and it was some time before he was able to make it subservient to his own personality. Although more noticeable at first in the instrumental music of the period, the *galant* style was not confined to that branch of the art, and led gradually to a certain lowering of operatic standards. It is amusing to read the patronizing and "up-to-date" comments of Wolfgang, aged fourteen, on Jommelli's "Armida," an opera that combined in some way the severity and dignity of the school of Leo with the picturesque orchestration of Rameau, and an almost modern German sense of romance: "Beautiful, but too careful and old-fashioned for the theatre!" The glorious days of Italian opera were indeed coming to an end; the stately eloquence of Metastasio, Jommelli and Hasse belonged to a past generation, and the sentimental humour of

Piccinni's "Buona figliuola" had set a fashion destined to rule the musical world until Mozart himself was in a position to lead a new movement.

Yet only a few months later another force made itself felt in the boy's musical development. The summer of 1770 was spent at Bologna, where he underwent a long course of instruction from Padre Martini. Martini, although one of the most learned musicians of his or of any other time, was no dry pedant, but a man of singular amiability with a strong sense of humour. Burney says of him, "He joins to innocence of life and simplicity of manners a native cheerfulness, softness, and philanthropy. Upon so short an acquaintance I never liked any man more; and I felt as little reserve with him in a few hours as with an old friend or beloved brother." We have only to look at his portrait,[1] with its droll smile and twinkling eyes, to understand how Wolfgang soon developed a lasting affection for him, an affection no doubt deepened by the regular lessons in counterpoint which he received from him. That most young musicians find the study of strict counterpoint detestable in the extreme is due mainly to the incompetence of their teachers. Wolfgang worked through a good many exercises from Fux's celebrated treatise under the tuition of his father; but the rigid disciplinarian who could write of his own exercises for the violin, "the more unpleasant they are found, the better I shall be pleased—I intended them to be so," was not likely to understand the value of strict counterpoint in awakening a pupil's sense of beauty and style. To Martini, on the other

[1] A very characteristic portrait of him is reproduced in Vernon Lee's *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*.

hand, it was a living language, saturated as he was with the knowledge of the great composers of the polyphonic period, and the result of his teaching was that Mozart eventually obtained a mastery of counterpoint such as was rare even among composers of the first rank. There was hardly ever a period at which he did not make a point of employing contrapuntal methods, not as a mere display of learning, but as a means of poetic expression, and the consequence was that his polyphony, instead of sounding deliberately archaistic, as it so frequently does in Beethoven's late works, is always essentially Mozartian and imaginative.

During the months that were spent at home or at Vienna in the intervals between his Italian journeys the influences on Mozart were of a different character, though still essentially Italian in a certain aspect. At Salzburg opera was practically non-existent; but there were a few Italian musicians there, including Brunetti the violinist and Ceccarelli the *castrato*, and Italian was the language of the court. The chief opportunities for composition were afforded by the services of the church and the entertainments of the archbishop and the nobility. Almost the whole of Mozart's church music belongs to the period between his Italian travels and his final breach with the archbishop in 1781, and to the same period belongs an enormous quantity of instrumental music now seldom remembered. There was not the same distinction in those days that there is now between symphonic and chamber music. Neither symphony nor quartet had at that time developed the essentially serious quality that we have attached to the forms since the later days of Mozart and Haydn.

Symphonies were written for very small bands, such as would be quite suitable to private rooms, and the now obsolete title of *divertimento* was often applied to any work in a series of movements for three strings or any larger combination; and indeed the title of *divertimento* was in practically all cases quite appropriate to the poetic content of the work, whether it were actually named symphony, serenade, *notturno*, or *cassation*. But it is from this long and regular experience that Mozart learned to think symphonically, to conceive of music not as a solo with accompaniment, an individual personality against a neutral background, nor yet as counterpoint, the simultaneous and conflicting interaction of three or four equal and essentially independent forces, but as an organization of individuals of various types in such a way that they ceased to be personalities and became merely the mechanical agents of transmission by which the composer gave audible life to the most direct expression of his own brain.

Italian opera, Italian polyphony and Italo-German symphony—these three early influences were fundamental and permanent throughout Mozart's life, although not always to an equal extent, and they must be distinguished from the later forces which appeared sometimes to act upon his mind more conspicuously, but were none the less of a transitory nature. It must be always borne in mind that Mozart was only thirty-five when he died, so that his musical productions cover just that period of a man's life when he is most susceptible to external influences. To the end of his days he was experimenting, and experimenting with a practical knowledge of his surroundings, so that the course of his

development is in some ways very different from that of men condemned to a life of solitude and isolation like Beethoven, Domenico Scarlatti, and J. S. Bach. Such men present in some ways a simpler artistic life-story; the foundations of musical character once laid down, the rest is all self-development from the inside. In considering Mozart we are confronted with greater complications; even setting aside for the moment all his non-dramatic works, we shall find his development much affected by mere material considerations—the exigencies of patrons, the peculiarities of individual executants, and so forth—and in addition to these, we have to take into account external influences of a definitely musical nature, such as the direct influence of other composers' works. Below these outward growths there is always the fundamental musical style, built upon the three main bases indicated above, and beyond all these considerations there remains the most important factor of all, and the most difficult to interpret in the idiom of literature, the growth of Mozart's essential human personality, made manifest in terms of musical sound.

Mozart's early efforts at dramatic composition do not call for detailed analysis here. They have been described at some length by Otto Jahn, and MM. de Wyzewa and de Saint-Foix have treated them with patient and exhaustive criticism, so as to present the exact balance of influence that determined the composition of almost every bar. Judged in relation to Mozart's entire artistic work, they have a certain interest, as contributing their share towards the gradual growth of his musical personality; but if we look at them merely as forerunners of the great dramas which still hold the stage, we can find little

in them that is of permanent and first-rate importance. The two childish entertainments "Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebotes" and "Apollo et Hyacinthus" may be dismissed at once. Wolfgang's first real opera, "La finta semplice," was composed at the age of twelve. Leopold had taken him to Vienna in January 1768,[1] and had worked his hardest to get the child's talents recognized both at court and among the aristocracy. But his attempts were not very successful; the Empress cared little for music, and Joseph II was concerned only with saving money. The aristocracy, Leopold considered, were indifferent to everything except frivolous amusements, and of course all the other musicians were consumed with jealousy. A sensation had to be made, and Leopold, fired by a suggestion thrown out by the Emperor probably as a jest, made up his mind that Wolfgang should write an opera. The Imperial Opera was in the hands of an Italian, Afflisio[2] by name, under terms that enabled him to do as he pleased without reference to the Emperor's wishes. The proposal was made to him through the Dutch Ambassador, who had known Wolfgang at The Hague, and Dr. L'Augier[3] and Baron van Swieten supported it on the grounds that, even if the music was poor, all Vienna would be sure to flock to the theatre to see a little boy of twelve conduct. The opera appears to

[1] The Mozarts arrived at Vienna in September 1767, but they fled to Olmütz at once on account of the small-pox, which Wolfgang himself did not escape catching.

[2] Leopold's letters call him *Affligio*; but Hermann Deiters, who revised the latest edition of Jahn, says that *Afflisio* was the correct form of his name.

[3] Dr. L'Augier was a physician with a good knowledge of music. He had been a friend of Domenico Scarlatti in Spain, and is frequently mentioned by Burney.

have been finished (under difficulties with the poet and singers) in the course of the summer, and was put into rehearsal; but by the middle of September it became clear that Afflisio had no intention whatever of producing it. Leopold was furious, and set out a long complaint of his ill-treatment to the Emperor. But the Emperor was powerless, and Afflisio merely replied that he would perform the opera if Leopold insisted, but would at the same time organize a parody of it and make the whole thing a ridiculous failure.

Afflisio had his public to consider, being a man of business, and very probably saw that his chance of a financial success was small. Is there any London manager of to-day who would risk the production of a "musical comedy" that was the work of a boy of twelve? If he were a genius of Mozart's calibre (*i.e.* of the calibre of Mozart at twelve) his work would probably be too musicianly, and if he were merely a mediocrity, he would not even have the advantage of a trustworthy name and a practised hand for writing what the public wanted. Leopold had to give in, and eventually the opera was performed at Salzburg.

There is nothing remarkable about "La finta semplice" except that it was the work of a boy. It is a very ordinary Italian *opera buffa;* the libretto (by Goldoni) is made up of the usual situations arising out of the amorous tendencies of an old man and the tricks played upon him by a crafty young woman and the lover whom she prefers. If one was to consider it seriously, without reference to other comic operas of the period, it would appear trivial and rather vulgar, and one might even feel that there was something repellent about its being set to music by a child. But it is evident that Wolfgang viewed it merely as an

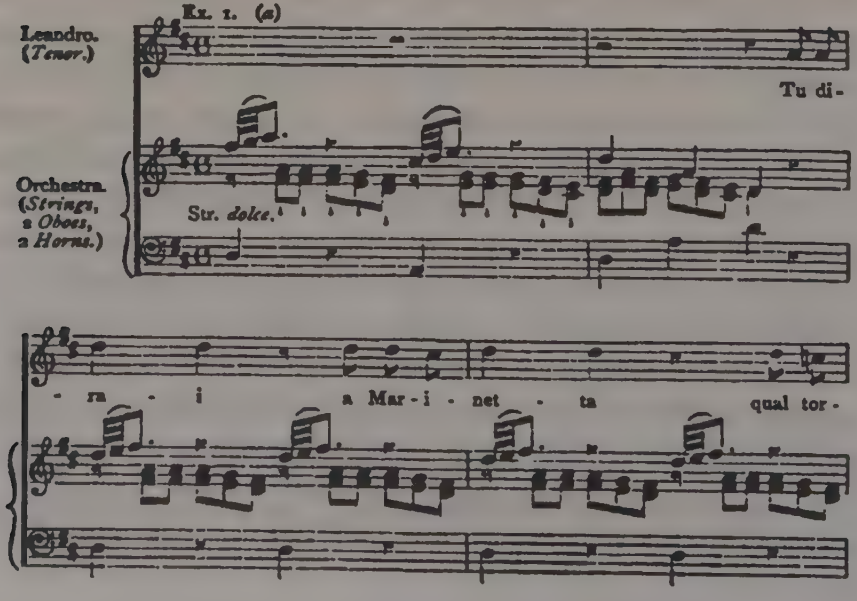
entertainment of a stock pattern, and that it never occurred to him to consider the characters as individuals. They were regular types of *opera buffa*, represented by regular types of singers, and no more. He had been taken frequently to the opera, and had seen Piccinni's famous "La buona figliuola,"[1] Gassmann's "La notte critica," and Giuseppe Scarlatti's "La moglie padrona"; these showed him at once what sort of music to provide. Piccinni's opera was, in fact, the one that had originally created the fashion; Scarlatti, a grandson of Alessandro, was an efficient imitator, and Florian Gassmann was an Austrian pupil of Padre Martini, who is in many ways an interesting forerunner of Mozart. "La notte critica," like "La buona figliuola," had the advantage of a libretto by Goldoni which is very fairly amusing. Gassmann, like Mozart, puts a great deal more work into his score than the Italians, but not having the inventive genius of the fully-developed Mozart to carry it off, his opera is often rather heavy in style. We notice this especially in the finale to the first act, a scene in which a number of characters meet in a garden at night, with the result of endless confusion of identity. It was one of the stock scenes of Italian comic opera, and reappears in "Le Nozze di Figaro"—Beaumarchais having no doubt borrowed the idea from Italian opera himself. Gassmann is too much preoccupied with symphonic development; his detail is interesting, and he ends the act with an ensemble of voices dying gradually away into the distance till only a single bass note is left. It was a genuinely poetical idea; but the general impression of the finale

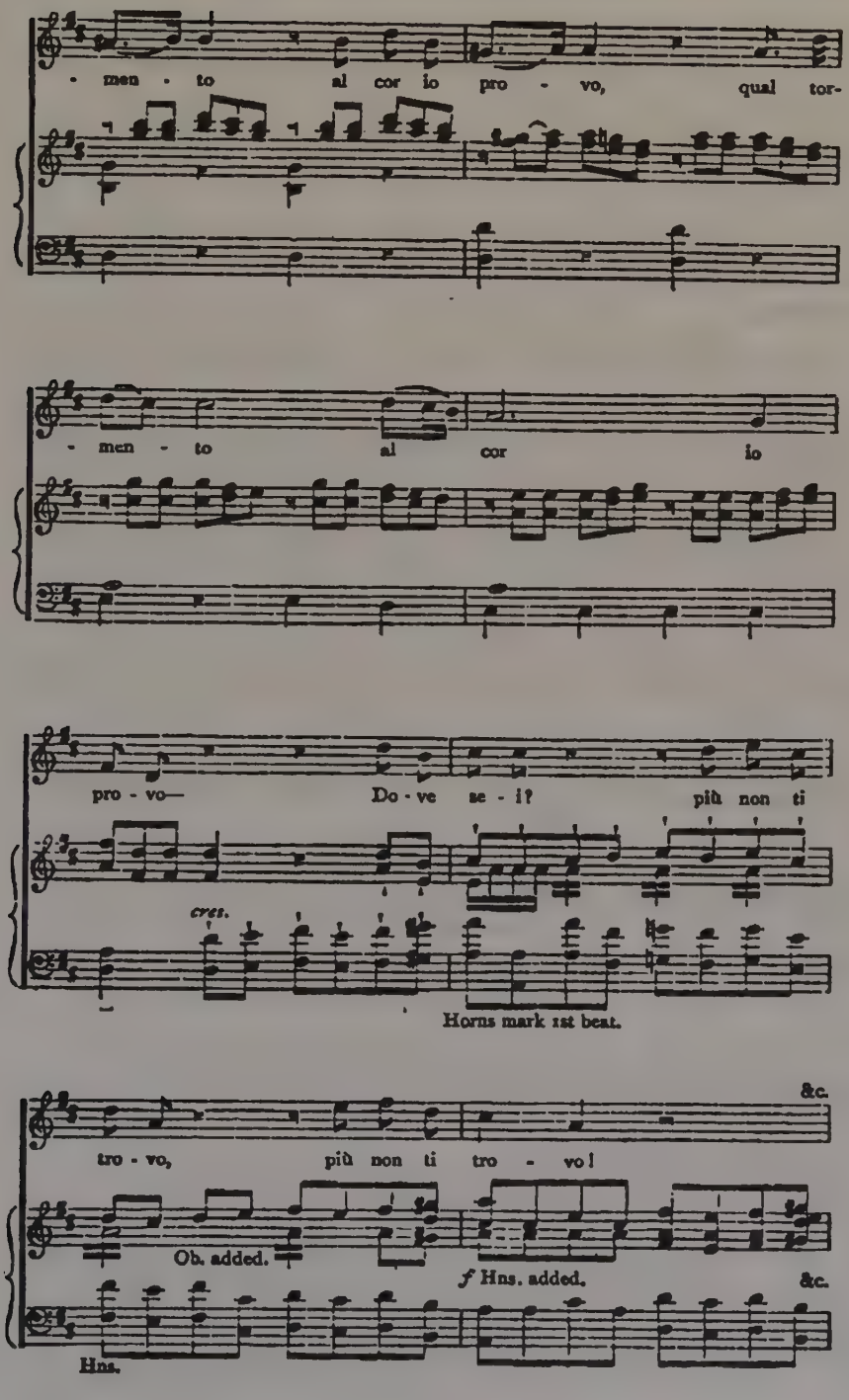
[1] The full score of "La buona figliuola" was printed in London, and copies are occasionally to be found in catalogues of second-hand music.

is that it is tedious and laboured just at the moment of all others where good workmanship may well give way to an effect of bustle and excitement.

The following example will give an idea of Gassmann's style, and I quote it in preference to giving an extract from Mozart, because Gassmann represents a mature type of music which Mozart at that time was merely imitating without contributing anything new of his own. The situation is as follows: Leandro has been serenading Cecilia, but can get no answer. His servant Carlotto undertakes to arrange matters through Marinetta, the lady's maid, while Leandro is to wait at the Caffè della Luna. Leandro before going away starts to give Carlotto very precise instructions, but finds that Carlotto is not paying any attention to him. The two themes, "Tu dirai a Marinetta" and "Dove sei? più non ti trovo," are contrasted and alternated with very humorous effect, leading to the climax of rage, "O che smania al cor io provo," which is repeated after the regular Italian fashion.

Ex. 1. (a)

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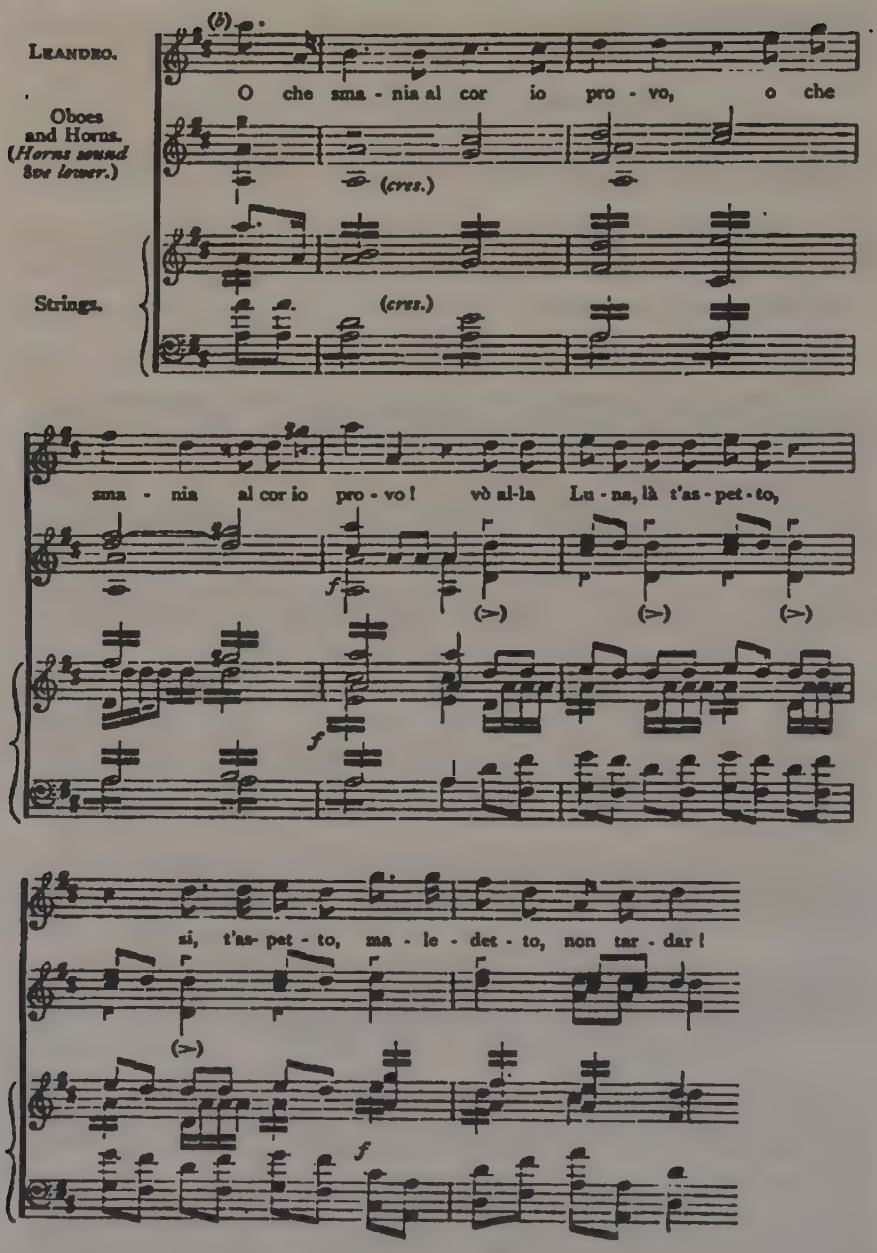
Hns.


LEANDRO.
O che sma - nia al cor io pro - vo, o che
Oboes and Horns. (Horns sound 8ve lower.)
(cres.)
Strings.
(cres.)
sma - nia al cor io pro - vo! vò al-la Lu - na, là t'as - pet - to,
f
(>)
(>)
(>)
f
si, t'as- pet - to, ma - le - det - to, non tar - dar!
(>)
f

The general effect is on the whole spirited and amusing, though the themes of the voice part are not particularly notable. The interesting feature is the treatment of the orchestra, which is much fuller

and more varied than is the case in Italian operas. The instrumental themes are indeed much more individual than those of the voice—this strikes us at the very start—and the alternating use of oboes and horns in the last four bars of the second extract shows that the composer had a vein of humour that was essentially symphonic in character. Gassmann is, in fact, very representative of the Austrian as opposed to the Italian musical temperament. He was not a dramatist by nature, but a symphonist who occasionally found it convenient to write operas.

To the same year as "La finta semplice" belongs "Bastien und Bastienne," a one-act operetta with German words, which was acted at Vienna in the garden of Dr. Anton Mesmer, the celebrated hypnotist.[1] This little work is imitated mainly from French models. Wolfgang had heard Monsigny's "Rose et Colas" at Paris, and Philidor's "Le sorcier"; possibly he was also acquainted with Rousseau's "Le devin du village." He seems to have begun the composition of "Bastien und Bastienne" at Salzburg and to have finished it at Vienna, more under the influence of J. A. Hiller, a popular German composer, who was himself influenced by French and also by English models. Mozart's work is no more than an agreeable trifle. It is sometimes performed nowadays, but it owes its fame less to its intrinsic merits than to the name of Mozart, and to

[1] Jahn considered that this Dr. Mesmer was not identical with the discoverer of "animal magnetism"; Hermann Deiters, in the fourth edition of Jahn, maintains that he was. The question is of interest, since it might have been through the influence of the Mesmer family that Mozart became interested in mysticism. Mesmer himself had, however, left Vienna for good in 1777, so that the influence cannot have emanated directly from himself.

the coincidence of its first theme with that of the "Eroica" symphony.

Wolfgang and his father set off on their first Italian tour in December 1769. We possess a large number of letters written by him to his sister, which give us a good idea of his impressions. He was fairly fluent in the Italian language when he started, and was consequently ready to assume an Italian point of view as soon as he reached Verona. Through the good offices of Count Firmian, the governor of Lombardy, he was engaged to write an opera for the next season at Milan; this was "Mitridate, re di Ponto," composed during the autumn of 1770 and performed on December 26. "Mitridate" was an adaptation by one Cigna-Santi of a tragedy by Racine which had been translated into Italian by Parini. It fell far short of the literary beauty of Metastasio's opera books, but it was very efficiently put together, and provided the composer and singers with well-contrasted dramatic effects. Mozart unfortunately was not yet temperamentally equal to the treatment of such a subject. It is a mistake to suppose that all Italian operas of the period were merely displays of vocal virtuosity. Their convèntions, it is true, make them impossible for a modern audience to appreciate; but they were conceived in an essentially dramatic spirit. Metastasio had a very clear idea of fusing music and poetry into a dramatic whole, and indeed the two were so inseparable in his mind that, although another man was to compose the music for his dramas, he himself invariably imagined some sort of melody to his verses, and sometimes even wrote it down and sent it to the musician. The function of the aria was always the expression of

emotion, strange as it may seem to us moderns. Something which we perhaps feel to be vital was indeed sacrificed; it was sacrificed, however, not to virtuosity but to classic dignity. We miss the sense of humanity in the music; the audiences of those days were concerned not with men, but with heroes. No wonder then that Mozart at fourteen was unable to realize the greatness of his task. He adopted the Italian style with extraordinary facility; his natural genius added to that a sense of beauty and a wealth of detail that separate him at once from the average run of Italian composers; but it is only in situations depending on some quite simple and obvious emotion that his music can really be considered moving and expressive.

The opera was sufficiently successful for the boy to be commissioned to write music for a *serenata* in honour of the marriage of the Archduke Ferdinand with Maria Beatrice of Modena in October 1771. This was a much easier task; "Ascanio in Alba" had nothing dramatic about it at all, and may be conveniently described as a mixture of ballet and cantata, not unlike an English "masque," though its form owed its origin largely to old-fashioned French opera. Its one and only business was to be decorative and charming, and Mozart had no difficulty in producing music admirably suited to the occasion. Between "Ascanio in Alba" and the next opera, "Lucio Silla," also composed for Milan, a full year elapsed, and it was a year of some importance in Mozart's life. It was a year of continuous hard work at Salzburg, and the year too in which a new archbishop, the notorious Hieronymus Colloredo, had been enthroned to the formal and uninspired

strains of Mozart's "Il sogno di Scipione"; it was also the year which marked definitely in the young composer the change from boyhood to manhood.[1] The change is very perceptible in the compositions of this period; a new note of passion appears, especially in the slow movements of his quartets and sonatas, which are often in minor keys, and at times quite romantic in character. There was a wave of romanticism passing over all Germany at the time, and it was felt not only by Mozart but by Haydn, as we may easily see by comparing his pianoforte sonata in C minor (1771 or 1772) with those that precede it; after the grace and charm of the earlier sonatas, we come suddenly upon an emotional outburst that forecasts the Sonate Pathétique or the C minor Symphony. If Haydn could be so susceptible to the tendency of the age in middle life, no wonder Mozart gave acute expression to it at the age when he was most conscious of new emotions and passions.

It was perhaps just the moment for Mozart to compose an opera, had he been provided with the right libretto and the right occasion. But he had to some extent lost touch again with Italy, and was becoming more and more of an instrumental composer. If it had only chanced that he should have had "Mitridate" to set this year instead of two years earlier, he might have produced a masterpiece which would have carried out the dramatic ideals of Jommelli; but "Lucio Silla" was a frigid piece of formality in which only one character, the heroine Giunia, had any semblance of life. Wolfgang could

[1] For a detailed study of Mozart's development at this time and his relations to the musical and psychological movements of the period, the reader must be referred to the work of MM. de Wyzewa and de Saint-Foix.

find little to interest him beyond the work of providing the singers with the kind of music that suited them, and Leopold naturally thought that that was all there was to be done in any opera. The work was performed on December 26 under rather trying circumstances; the archduke of the moment kept everybody waiting for three hours before he was ready for the opera to begin, and one of the tenors, being a church-singer secured in a hurry as a stop-gap, was unaccustomed to the stage and over-acted so energetically that the audience burst out laughing at the most tragic moment. The *prima donna* was much upset, and sang badly all the evening, the more so as she was very jealous of the *primo uomo*, who had been applauded by the archduchess the moment he came on the stage. Such is Leopold's account, and he goes on to say that in spite of these mishaps the opera was a great success. Of course it was—being Wolfgang's; but it is a significant fact that this was the last occasion on which Wolfgang was ever invited to compose a work for the Italian stage.

The plain truth was that "Lucio Silla," interesting as it may be as an episode in the development of a great man, was a mediocre opera taken as a whole, and not even as good as "Mitridate." Mozart had arrived at a moment in his life when he realized in a new way what was meant by musical expression. What he really had experienced himself he could translate into music; but of neither his emotions nor his means of expressing them had he yet obtained complete artistic control. "Lucio Silla" consequently presents great inequalities; there are moments when the composer does no more than write the conven-

tional aria which the singer desired, and other moments when, regardless of singer or audience, he concentrates all his forces on self-expression. Of a general conception of the opera as a dramatic whole there is no trace. The majority of the arias are extremely difficult, and probably more difficult than effective as vocalization. The *coloratura* is employed not as a means of dramatic expression, nor even as an effect of vocal brilliance; it is often exactly that type of *coloratura* which makes the listener feel that the voice is struggling to execute passages which are essentially unvocal. There are however two scenes for Giunia alone which rise to really tragic heights—her invocation to her father's shade in Act I, and her determination to face death herself in Act III. There is also a remarkable scene, to some extent modelled on Gluck's "Orfeo," in which Giunia, accompanied by a chorus of mourners at the tomb of her father, meets with her lover Cecilio. In these scenes we see something of the real Mozart, indeed, of a Mozart perhaps more real than we shall see again, after "Idomeneo," until quite the end of his career.

"Lucio Silla," in spite of its defects, had shown the young composer what were the possibilities of Italian *opera seria*, and from this date to the close of his life *opera seria* became his most absorbing passion. It was a passion, however, that was destined never to find a thoroughly satisfactory outlet. He returned from Italy to Salzburg, and devoted himself once more to writing symphonies which sometimes forecast clearly the grandeur of his later instrumental works; to the same year also belong the first sketches for the incidental music to Gebler's play "König

Thamos," rewritten in 1779. The play was based on an ancient Egyptian subject, and contained various allusions to the new ideals of religious enlightenment which were then gradually spreading over Germany through the influence of the Freemasons. How much Mozart understood of Gebler's inner allegory we cannot attempt to guess; but we shall see eventually how he absorbed these ideas in later life, and ultimately gave them their most complete musical expression. Gebler had hoped that the religious choruses of his play would be set to music by Gluck; however, Mozart was evidently in temperamental sympathy with them, and was also just at the stage when Gluck's dramatic principles made a strong appeal to him. The first chorus, "Schon weichet dir, Sonne," is familiar to English church-goers in its arrangement as a motet, "Splendente te, Deus" ("O God, when Thou appearest").

The following year brought about a certain reaction from this serious style. Mozart was commissioned by the Elector of Bavaria to write a comic opera for Munich, and the lengthy visit to that small but lively capital seems to have given him a definite turn in the direction of fashionable elegance and virtuosity of style. "La finta giardiniera," like "La finta semplice," is a conventional *opera buffa* of the stock Italian pattern. It contains plenty of spirited and agreeable music, but little that is really characteristic of Mozart. In reading the score it must be remembered that the version printed does not represent the opera in its earliest shape. Composed originally towards the end of 1774, it was revised in 1779 or 1780 with a view to a performance in German. Moreover, the opera was performed

again at Frankfurt in 1789, and it is extremely probable that it then underwent a further revision. These alterations naturally resulted in a bewildering diversity of style; we find, for instance, in Act II an aria for the second soprano in an old-fashioned light style, made to run straight on over a change of scene into a long and developed *scena* for the heroine, in a style which undoubtedly points to a much later date of composition. The join too is painfully apparent and by no means well managed. We must therefore be on our guard against ascribing to Mozart at this early date that sense of musical continuity which is so important in his later operas.

The libretto of "La finta giardiniera" had been set to music almost a year before by Pasquale Anfossi, whose opera was produced at Rome, and very soon was enjoying an enormous success all over Europe. There can be no doubt that Mozart was acquainted with Anfossi's music when he re-set the libretto, since he follows his general outline exactly in many cases. Nevertheless, Mozart's music is in its essentials widely different. It is throughout less obviously vocal, and more symphonic, if I may recall the distinction that was drawn in the first chapter. Anfossi and the rest of the Italian writers of *opera buffa* were skilled tradesmen, supplying what the public wanted with a minimum of labour on their own part, and exacting a minimum of labour on the part of their audiences. They understood the capacities of opera-singers to a nicety, and produced simply effective airs, with accompaniments that were adequate and no more. Mozart, on the other hand, had habituated his mind to thinking in terms of the symphony, and conceived voices and instruments

all as component parts of an organic whole; they are there, all of them, not to amuse the public, but to make music. The curious result is that although Mozart's voice parts are in a sense less vocal than Anfossi's, his opera gives a much more vocal impression, because it is a much more musical impression. As MM. de Wyzewa and de Saint-Foix neatly express it, "Voix et orchestre, on a l'impression que tout parle, et souvent très agréablement ou très sprituellement, chez Anfossi, mais que, chez Mozart, tout chante."

"La finta giardiniera" was produced at Munich with great success in January 1775. The following April saw the production of another *serenata* at Salzburg, "Il re pastore," remembered now only by the aria "L'amerò, sarò costante," which is very fairly representative of the work—a string of arias admirably written with an unfailing sense of grace and beauty, but without the least suspicion of dramatic power.

It was a long time before Mozart again had the opportunity of writing an opera. Yet during those five years of development in other directions, his thoughts turned often to his most passionate ideal. He was now a grown man, with a just sense of pride in his own powers, and at the age when the petty tyranny of home life naturally became intolerable, especially in the provincial atmosphere of Salzburg. He pours out his woes in a long letter to the man whom he knows to be his best friend, the one man whose musical opinion he really values—old Padre Martini at Bologna. "I live in a country where music has very little luck, although, besides those who have left us altogether, we have still some very

good musicians, and especially composers of sound learning and taste. As far as the theatre is concerned, we are in a bad way for want of singers. We have no *castrati*, and shall not have them so easily, since they want to be well paid; and generosity is not our national failing." Even at Vienna there was a very inadequate supply of tragic singers; Gluck's "Alceste" was interpreted mainly by singers whose proper sphere was *opera buffa*. It is interesting to see that Mozart seems (at this date, at any rate) to have had no objection to the *castrati;* indeed, he evidently regarded them as the only possible interpreters of serious opera.

Even Leopold saw that under the new archbishop's régime Wolfgang could not possibly find suitable scope for his genius. He had gone on composing table-music and church-music for Hieronymus Colloredo, but if he was to keep up his reputation as a composer of symphonies and as a pianist, let alone as a composer of opera, he must set forth on his travels again and hope to obtain a permanent post at another court. After some trouble with the archbishop he was finally allowed to leave Salzburg in September 1777. Leopold, however, would not let him go alone, and since he could not accompany him himself, as he had done on all previous occasions, he sent his wife to take care of Wolfgang, and see that he paid proper heed to the paternal warnings against alcohol and doubtful company. Of Wolfgang's visit to Munich and Mannheim this is not the place to speak in detail; the long winter spent at Mannheim, although most important in his general musical development, brought him no chance of appearing as a dramatist. At Munich there was a faint chance,

but it came to nothing. Writing about a German version of Piccinni's "La bella pescatrice" which he had seen, he goes on to say, "They have no original pieces. They would like to have a German *opera seria* here soon, and they would like me to compose it." But he adds that it was all mere talk and no more. Piccinni's opera had excited his brain for the moment, he admits, and he plans the sort of contract he would like to make—four German operas a year, some serious, some comic—"and how popular I should become, if I were to help in raising the music of the German national stage!" All mere talk! His old friend Misliweczek, who was in hospital at Munich, told him to go to Italy—"there one is properly appreciated!" "And he is quite right," adds Mozart; "I have never had so much honour and appreciation anywhere as I had in Italy, and one gets some credit for it if one has written operas in Italy, especially at Naples." He forgot that he was no longer an infant prodigy. Misliweczek had had the offer of an opera for Naples, and not wishing to go there again himself was ready to hand over the engagement to Mozart, knowing that his own reputation at Naples was a good enough guarantee for the ability of any younger composer whom he chose to send instead. Mozart was all for accepting the offer. "I have an unspeakable desire to write another opera. . . . If I only hear an opera mentioned, if I only go inside a theatre and hear them tuning, I am quite beside myself."

At Mannheim he heard Holzbauer's "Günther von Schwarzburg," an important landmark in the history of German opera. He rightly criticizes the libretto as being unworthy of the music, which was extra-

ordinarily vigorous considering the advanced age of the composer. Another opera that he heard was Schweitzer's "Rosamunde," and "Alceste" by the same composer, both to libretti by Wieland. Mozart was always a sharp critic, but he had a good word for Schweitzer, although he is now completely forgotten. Yet German opera in general was in a bad way. The singers were miserable, he says, and it was hardly ever possible to get a serious opera performed. He gave up all hopes of German opera. Leopold had written to tell him that the Emperor intended to establish permanent German opera at Vienna, but Wolfgang was quite angry and indignant at the idea of his taking part in the scheme. He knew that it only meant comic opera, and he had put that away with childish things: "Some people think one remains twelve years old all one's life!" "Don't forget my wish to write operas! I am envious of everyone who writes one; I could positively cry with annoyance when I hear or even see an aria. But it must be Italian, not German! an *opera seria*, not *buffa!*" And a few days later, writing about the project of going to Paris, he brings in the subject again, with the same conditions: "French rather than German, but Italian rather than either German or French." The nearest thing he could get to Italian opera was the task of writing Italian concert arias for Raaff the tenor, Aloysia Weber, and other singers; and he rejoiced at the prospect of Paris and the *concert spirituel*, because the French appreciated good choral music, which he loved writing. They were accustomed to Gluck's treatment of the chorus, and Piccinni's "Roland" had been unfavourably criticized because its choruses were bald and weak.

Paris, however, was little better than Mannheim. He wrote a ballet, "Les petits riens," for Noverre, and there was some talk of a grand opera, but again it came to nothing. Leopold had told him that he was to stay in Paris until he had established a reputation there; but matters went ill with him. He did not obtain the success he had expected, and he disliked both Paris and the Parisians. On July 3 his mother died, and he was looked after to some extent by Baron von Grimm. Grimm and Mozart had started as good friends, but Mozart soon began to resent the older man's interference, and he was glad enough when his father told him to leave Paris, although he did not look forward with any pleasure to taking up his residence in Salzburg again. He left Paris towards the end of September, having been there six months. It is difficult to form a complete judgment of the impressions that he received there. The long letters which he wrote to his father say very little about the music that he was hearing or writing. But of one thing we may be certain, that he went to as many operas as possible, and that he was well informed on all the details of the great war of the Gluckists and Piccinnists. He was too late to see Gluck himself in Paris, but he saw Piccinni, and Grimm was a great enthusiast for Italian music. At the time when Mozart arrived in Paris, it must be remembered that the battle was still undecided. Gluck's "Armide" had not obtained the success of his previous operas, and Piccinni's "Roland," which the composer himself expected to be a failure, turned out a success. Mozart's natural sympathies were with Italian music, but he had always had a great admiration for Gluck. Since Lully and

Rameau there had been no great French composer of serious opera, and real French music was seen at its best in lighter forms. But it must be remembered that external influences were strong even here. Duni, who was the head of the school, was a Neapolitan, and even such a national hero as Monsigny shows a very decided Italian influence in the cast of his melodies. Grétry too had been trained in Italy. Yet in spite of the fact that France, from the days of Rossi and Cavalli down to those of Rossini and Meyerbeer, was dependent largely on foreigners for serious opera, French music, even at its most cosmopolitan moments, has always had a strong individuality of its own. If a rough generalization may be forgiven—I offer it more as a momentary aspect of the question than as a permanent basis of criticism—the French seem to have regarded the characters of an opera as subservient to the drama, whereas the Italians regarded the drama as a frame for the characters; the Germans, one might add, have regarded both characters and drama as subordinate to music. The usual statements about the French interest in dancing and declamation as opposed to the Italian lack of interest in anything but vocal acrobatism are in the main misleading. The essential thing about the Italian point of view is that it is individualistic. Some of the audience, of course, went to the opera just to hear singers execute runs and shakes; some no doubt went to see an interpretation of a part by a particular man or woman, just as modern audiences do in every country. But taking poets, composers, singers and audiences at their best, Italy always concentrated attention on single personalities. Tristan and Parsifal are subordinate figures compared

to Wagner himself; they are only parts of a great musical utterance. The same may be said of the characters in "Fidelio"—indeed, in "Fidelio" we are all the more conscious of Beethoven's personality rather than of Florestan's or Leonora's, because Beethoven, as I said before, is not really a dramatist. Contrast Beethoven or Wagner with Verdi, early or late in his career; whether we take "La traviata" or "Falstaff," whether we take the hero or any other principal character of an opera, we are made to feel that we see before us a real individual, and that for any given moment when he is before us the rest of the opera falls into the background. Florestan is a part of Beethoven; Verdi himself is only a part of Falstaff.

The French attitude is more difficult to explain. We cannot sum up the whole case by saying that Meyerbeer is only a part of Scribe. We must consider Lully, Rameau, Gluck, Méhul, Cherubini, Rossini, and perhaps Saint-Saëns and Debussy as well. But we can safely say that in none of these men's operas (that is, in none of their French operas—Rossini must be considered for the moment only as the composer of "Guillaume Tell") do we find either the powerful individualism of Verdi, or the musical domination of Wagner, unless it be perhaps in such a work as "Samson et Dalila." Gluck, of course, admitted frankly that he tried to forget that he was a musician when he composed an opera. This was an attitude that Mozart could never take up; and it cannot be said that Rameau or Cherubini, for instance, ever forgot themselves to such an extent. But they often seem to have felt the force of drama so strongly as to become conscious of their own weakness as mere musicians. To those who are accustomed to the

Wagnerian or Mozartian point of view, it is heart-rending to see how at a great dramatic moment the older French composers, instead of rejoicing in the opportunity for a great musical outburst, will step aside apologetically, as if they had no business to be interfering. It was done cleverly, in its way; and when Beethoven drops into spoken words at the great moments of "Fidelio," we are so overcome by his sincerity that we forget the essential illogicality of the position. Here are Leonora and the rest using spoken dialogue for the business of daily life, and expressing themselves in music when their emotional state reaches a certain degree of passion. Then, at the moment when emotions are strung up to the highest pitch, the string breaks, Leonora's voice gives way, and the *prima donna* is a mere woman once more! Yet all who have seen "Fidelio" know that this is one of the most overwhelming things in the opera. Nevertheless, I suggest that the contrast of music and spoken word is not essential at that point when Leonora and Florestan are first left alone together; Clärchen's death in "Egmont" is enough to show what Beethoven, at any rate later in life, was capable of doing in the way of wordless expression at the moment of reaction after a climax.

It is largely to the influence of Mozart himself that French opera in the nineteenth century adopted a different musical technique; but the essential characteristics, difficult as they are to define, except by the negation of characteristics essentially German or Italian, seem to have remained the same. One very definite characteristic of French opera is a sense of the stage, considered as a whole, and considered on the basis of the theatrical convention, that the

stage is the stage and not real life. Conventions of technical method may change with the lapse of years, and a modern representation, say, of Gluck's "Armide" may appear to differ enormously from the style of its first performance. But whether the ladies wear loose draperies and pose in the "classical" manner, or whether they wear hoops and powder and dance in straight lines, there is always the consciousness that Gluck visualized the opera in his mind as a consistent and logically developed stage picture. It may be difficult for a modern stage-manager to see in his imagination what is the right way of materializing this vision; but it is there, and the better it is carried out, the more complete will be the effect of the opera. With operas of an Italian or German type, as we shall see later, this is not always the case; even Mozart is not always considerate on this point, and Beethoven never seems to have had the remotest idea of it. With Verdi and the other Italians again, we feel that it does not matter; we have neither ears nor eyes for anybody or anything except the character who is before us at the moment.

It has been necessary to attempt a rather detailed exposition of these points of view in order to understand the state of Mozart's mind when he returned to Austria from his long absence in Mannheim and Paris. His period of education was now over, and although he never left off learning, he started from this moment to work out his artistic development on his own lines, independent alike of the counsels of his father and of the musical traditions of an age that was past, and that had nothing more to teach either him or anyone else.

W. A. MOZART

From a coloured wax relief by an unknown French artist, probably made in Paris in 1778

CHAPTER III

"IDOMENEO"—I

Mozart left Paris in September 1778, and returned home by way of Mannheim, as before. The attraction at Mannheim was, of course, the Weber family; Mozart had fallen violently in love with Aloysia, the eldest daughter, and hoped that the time had now come to make her his wife. But it was a different Mannheim to which he returned in 1778; the electoral court had been transferred to Munich, and with the court went most of the musicians and actors, including the Webers. He found an excuse for going to Munich in January 1779, and presented Aloysia with the finest of all the arias that he wrote for her—"Popoli di Tessaglia"; but she had changed her mind, and would have none of him, though she kept the song, and was often associated with him musically in later years. It was a very discontented Mozart that settled down again to the drudgery of a cathedral organist at Salzburg. He hated the archbishop, he hated the Salzburgers generally, and could find pleasure only in the society of his father and sister, though we may be sure that Leopold got on his nerves fairly often, in spite of all his affection. The chance of writing a serious opera seemed further off than ever. The only break in the monotony of Salzburg life was the visit of Schikaneder's theatrical company, which performed Gebler's "Thamos, König in Egypten." Mozart took up the music which he

had written for Gebler in 1778, and recast it with additions. The principal interest of "Thamos" for us is its connection with "Die Zauberflöte," and we must leave to a later chapter the story of Mozart's friendship with Schikaneder and his interest in Egyptian mysteries. "Thamos" was not a successful work. Mozart evidently set some value on the music, as he mentions it again in a letter to his father from Vienna in 1788: "I am very sorry that I shall not be able to make use of the music to 'Thamos.' The piece has a bad reputation, since it did not please, and is not performed any more. It could only be performed for the sake of the music, and that is hardly likely—it is a pity indeed."

Another dramatic work which must also be left to a later chapter is an unfinished German opera which appears to have been begun with a view to performance in Salzburg. The libretto was by the Mozarts' old friend Schachtner, to whom posterity is indebted for a good many reminiscences of Wolfgang's earliest childhood. The libretto of the work has for the most part disappeared, and not even the title is known. It has been published under the name of the heroine, "Zaide." Nothing is known about the circumstances under which it was written, but since it makes no very great demands on either singers or orchestra, we may well suppose that Mozart, driven to desperation by the dreariness of life at Salzburg, planned an attempt at organizing some sort of operatic performance with such modest forces as he could get together among his personal friends. The composition was probably interrupted by the invitation which he received in the summer of 1780 to write a serious opera for Munich.

Here at last was Mozart's great opportunity, it seemed. The libretto was to be written by the Abbé G. B. Varesco, chaplain to the archbishop of Salzburg, so that composer and poet might work together with greater facility. Unfortunately, the archbishop's chaplain had no sort of feeling for the stage. Mozart, as usual, left the greater part of the opera to be composed during the last few weeks of rehearsal, and then wrote from Munich to say that various scenes must be altered. Varesco was highly indignant at this mutilation of his masterpiece, and if Mozart insisted on cutting down his verses, he at least insisted that the drama should appear complete in print.

The general outline of the plot was as follows: Idomeneo, King of Crete, has taken part in the Trojan War, but for many years has not returned home. He has sent to Crete a number of Trojan captives, including Ilia, daughter of Priam, who falls in love with Idamante, the son of Idomeneo. Idamante returns her passion, but this is not made clear to her for some time after the curtain rises on the first act, owing to the very involved language in which operatic propriety compels him to conceal his feelings. Moreover, Ilia has a rival, Electra, who has taken refuge in Crete after the murder of Clytemnestra. At the beginning of Act I the returning fleet of Idomeneo is sighted, and Idamante celebrates the happy day by releasing the Trojan prisoners. Just as the ships near the harbour a storm arises, and the king only reaches safety by a miracle, having vowed in his moment of distress to sacrifice to Poseidon the first living thing that he meets on landing. Naturally the first person he encounters is his own son, whom he does not recognize, having

been away some twenty years. On discovering his identity he does not dare to tell him of his vow, but hastens away, forbidding his son to follow him. The act ends with a chorus and dance of the population welcoming the soldiers of Idomeneo.

In Act II Idomeneo decides to evade his vow by sending Idamante to escort Electra back to Argos. This confirms Ilia in the idea that Idamante loves Electra, and increases Idamante's bewilderment at his father's conduct towards him. They prepare to depart, but another storm arises, and a fearful monster issues from the sea, convincing the people that some particular person is guilty of offending the god. Idomeneo confesses himself to be the man, and expresses his readiness to die. The act ends with the chorus fleeing in terror from the monster.

In Act III Idamante decides to go forth and kill the monster himself or die in the attempt. This leads at last to a clear understanding between him and Ilia, but their expressions of love are interrupted by Electra, always wild with jealousy, and the king, who bids his son leave the island at once. The people of Crete, ravaged both by the monster and by a pestilence, come to demand the necessary victim, and Idomeneo is compelled to disclose the name of his son. The high priest is preparing for the sacrifice, when news is brought that Idamante has slain the monster. None the less he is prepared to be slain himself in fulfilment of his father's vow, and the devoted Ilia insists on taking his place. The difficulty is solved by the voice of an oracle, which proclaims that Idomeneo is to abdicate, and that Idamante, united to Ilia, is to reign in his stead. After a final outburst of jealous rage from Electra,

Idomeneo formally renounces the throne, and Idamante is crowned amid universal rejoicing.

The general scheme of the opera, which was modelled on an old French libretto once set by Campra, might have provided excellent opportunities for a man who understood the stage. Varesco had no doubt read his Metastasio, but he read him with the eye of an archbishop's chaplain, and not with that of a dramatist. Metastasio understood better than anyone that an opera libretto, even in the grand manner, must be concise and direct. Varesco is verbose and sententious, and never seems to have considered for a moment what the effect of his lines would be when set to music and presented on the stage. He seems too to have been a very disagreeable and difficult person to deal with. Wolfgang did not correspond with him directly, but made use of his father as an intermediary, and we gather from Leopold's letters that the chaplain not only objected very much to making alterations, but expected to be paid extra for them, like a printer.[1]

There were further difficulties with the singers. Idomeneo was taken by the tenor Raaff, an excellent singer but no actor, and in addition to that a man of sixty-five. He was, as might be expected, only too glad to give Mozart the benefit of his long experience of the stage—in other words, to obstruct the young composer as much as possible whenever he took the direction that his own genius indicated. Panzacchi, the other tenor, was a decidedly good actor, with some skill in singing, but as he too was

[1] The whole correspondence has been printed by Jahn in his Appendix xii. This Appendix was unfortunately omitted in the English translation.

well advanced in years, he had to be given more opportunities for displaying his abilities than were appropriate to the part of a confidant. The worst case perhaps was that of Dal Prato—"my *molto amato castrato Dal Prato*," as Mozart called him—who took the part of Idamante. He certainly could have given no trouble from being too old and experienced, for he was a mere boy and had never been on the stage in his life before. His voice was either badly trained or not trained at all, and he had no intelligence for either music or anything else. Mozart, however, seems to have shown endless patience in teaching him, and we gather from his letters that he could suffer stupidity of this kind better than the conceited ignorance of those who professed to be connoisseurs. Luckily the female parts were taken by Dorothea and Elisabeth Wendling, who were capable singers and gave the composer no trouble.

Mozart's correspondence with his father about the libretto shows that he at any rate had a thorough sense of the stage. Any musician perhaps might have complained when the poet put "asides" into his arias, or made the sense of one line run over into the next—faults more unpardonable in those days than now, since the normal structure of the eighteenth-century aria would be destroyed by irregularity of verse-construction, and an "aside," if occurring in an aria, might have to be repeated in an inconvenient and undramatic manner. But Mozart saw more essential things than these. His technical skill indeed might easily have overcome the difficulties of musical structure, as his later operas show, though probably his elderly and experienced singers would have resented anything that

they had not been accustomed to for the last forty years; but Varesco's dramatic blunders had to be corrected without any attempt at compromise. Thus Varesco let Idomeneo make his first appearance scrambling up the rocks at the back of the stage after the shipwreck; Mozart and Quaglio, the scene-painter, saw that this was undignified and ineffective, and caused him to enter with some of his followers, whom he dismisses a few lines later, in order to be alone when he meets his son. This next scene had to be very much cut down, since both Raaff and Dal Prato were such bad actors as to make the long dialogue in *recitativo secco* utterly intolerable. The same applied to some extent to the dialogue between Idomeneo and the confidant Arbace at the beginning of the second act. The second act required yet further curtailment: Varesco had written several stanzas for the chorus "Placido è il mar" which Mozart reduced to one, and between the storm-chorus and the final chorus he had put in an aria for Idomeneo. Mozart saw at once that an aria would destroy the whole effect of this very dramatic scene, and insisted on having merely a short recitative. The same thing had to be done in the third act. Varesco expected that Ilia and Idamante should sing a duet when on the point of being sacrificed; this was also cut out by Mozart for reasons which will be plain to any modern opera-goer. Had Raaff's advice been followed, we should have lost the great quartet in Act III, perhaps the most beautiful number in the whole opera; the excellent tenor considered that its place would be much more effectively filled by an aria for himself. The third act seems generally to have given Mozart the most

trouble. Varesco was apparently rather vague about the changes of scene in the course of the act. According to the score there are three separate scenes: the royal garden, for the scene between Idamante and Ilia, the quartet, and Arbace's soliloquy; the exterior of the royal palace, for the High Priest's address to Idomeneo and the chorus of plague-stricken Cretans; and the exterior of the temple of Neptune. This last scene serves apparently not only for the scene of the sacrifice, but for Electra's final outburst and the abdication of Idomeneo. But it seems from Mozart's letters as well as from the score itself that there was no change of scene at all at the first performance. Arbace sang his aria, and in accordance with operatic etiquette left the stage at the end of it; but Varesco's libretto directed him to be on the stage with Idomeneo at the beginning of the High Priest's recitative. "How can he be there again at once?" asks Mozart. "Luckily, he can stay away altogether," he goes on—Arbace has nothing to say in this scene—"but in order to be on the safe side, I have written a rather longer introduction to the High Priest's recitative." The next scene presented a similar difficulty. "After the chorus of mourning, the king, the whole people, and everybody all go away, and in the following scene stands the direction 'Idomeneo on his knees in the temple.' That cannot possibly be so; he must come with his complete train; so then there must of necessity be a march there, and I have written a quite simple march for two violins, viola, bass and two oboes, which is played *mezza voce*, while the king comes in and the priests prepare the things for the sacrifice; then

the king kneels down and begins his prayer." Now if there was a change of scene after Arbace's aria, there would have been no need for the lengthened introduction to the High Priest's recitative, which is not long enough to cover the shifting of so much scenery and the entry of so many people, unless we suppose that scenes were shifted in those days with the same rapidity as they are now, and the same applies to the next change of scene, at the end of the chorus, which runs straight on into the little march for strings and oboes. It is much more probable that there was a change of scene after Electra's final aria. This is a peculiarly awkward piece of stage-management. The oracle speaks (and here again Mozart had to rewrite the speech twice, making it shorter each time), Idomeneo and the others give vent to short interjections of surprise, and apparently remain on the stage, while Electra without a moment's pause breaks in with a long recitative followed by a long aria. It is obviously absurd that the rest of the company should remain quietly in the background as if they did not notice anything, to come forward again after the aria and proceed to the final business of Idomeneo's farewell speech and the coronation of Idamante and Ilia. They must get out of the way as best they can, and fresh point must be given to their re-entrance by a change of scene at the end of Electra's aria.

"Idomeneo" owes both its failings and its merits to the fact that it is a mixture of two types of opera, the Italian and the French. Varesco took a French libretto as his foundation, and, probably without considering dramatic effects at all, turned it into as close an imitation of a Metastasio drama as his dull

brain was capable of producing. Mozart in setting it to music was French by deliberate intention but Italian by natural instinct. Modern audiences, acquainted to some extent with the works of Gluck, are naturally most moved by the French moments of the opera, that is, by the great choruses, and the great accompanied recitatives, which are closely modelled on Gluck's "Alceste." We require a greater effort to focus our minds on the beauties of the Italian scenes. A modern audience has an unspeakable horror of *recitativo secco*, and this is not surprising considering the awkwardness of it when translated into German, and the utter stupidity of it when sung in Italian by a miscellaneous company of English, French, German or American singers, who often show only too plainly that they have not the least idea what it is all about. But *recitativo secco*, although apparently conventional and monotonous to the last degree, is as good a test as any of the merits both of poet and of composer. We shall see later on to what extraordinary perfection it was carried by Mozart when collaborating with Da Ponte. As a conscientious German he had indeed a certain advantage over the average prolific Italian composer, to whom it was so much a matter of routine that it probably never occurred to him to apply more than a half-conscious instinct to its composition. It may be seen at its worst in Handel's operas written for the London stage, the composer knowing well that nobody would pay the least attention to it.

For *recitativo secco*, it must be remembered, demands first and foremost an intimate appreciation of Italian dramatic poetry. To grasp its full significance we ought to saturate ourselves with

Metastasio, until we can realize the state of mind of an Italian or a cultivated Viennese who had heard the same drama set to music over and over again by different composers, until the words were as familiar to him as the canticles of the church service are to an Englishman. Rousseau in his *Dictionnaire de Musique* devotes a long article to Recitative, in which, although he shows his usual enthusiasm for everything Italian and his contempt for everything French, he admits that the Italians tended to employ the device to an extent that was often wearisome. But he goes on to say, "Démosthène parlant tout le jour ennuieroit à la fin; mais il ne s'en-suivroit pas de-là que Démosthène fût un Orateur ennuyeux. Ceux qui disent que les Italiens eux-mêmes trouvent leur *Récitatif* mauvais, le disent bien gratuitement; puisqu'au contraire il n'y a point de partie dans la Musique dont les Connoisseurs fassent tant de cas et sur laquelle il soient aussi difficiles. Il suffit même d'exceller dans cette seule partie, fût-on médiocre dans toutes les autres, pour s'élever chez eux au rang des plus illustres Artistes, et le célèbre *Porpora* ne s'est immortalisé que par-là."

English audiences probably judge recitative by the standard of the recitatives in the oratorios of Handel and Mendelssohn as delivered by oratorio singers of the Victorian school. Handel in his Italian operas had the best of all possible models to follow—Alessandro Scarlatti—though as I have said, writing as he did for London audiences, he took little trouble about them. Yet whether Handel's Italian recitatives are good or bad, one thing is certain about them, namely, that they must be sung at the same pace as an actor would speak the words in a play without music. Handel adopted the same formulæ

in his English oratorios, and we may without hesitation lay down the same rule, that the *secco* recitatives in these must be sung no slower than the words would be spoken by a good reciter. It is of course equally evident that the same rule must be followed in Bach's Passions. But it seems fairly certain that English singers, being by national tradition utterly unaccustomed to recitative, and being no doubt additionally hampered by Handel's not always successful attempts to set English words to Italian phrases (and we must remember also that Handel was neither an Italian nor an Englishman himself), were almost of necessity obliged to sing his recitatives a good deal slower than they were intended to be sung. A glance at the recitatives in "The Creation" or "The Seasons" will show that this slow tradition must have been firmly established at the time Haydn visited England, for most of Haydn's recitatives are so laid out that it is impossible to sing them at a speaking pace. Mendelssohn's genius was so essentially dramatic that he probably might have restored the balance, as Verdi did in Italian opera, by creating new melodic formulæ which took the place of the traditional style; but tradition dies hard in England, especially when it has no great antiquity, and Victorian sentimentalism firmly established the principle that to sing the words of the Bible at such a pace as to bring out their plain meaning in the clearest possible way was undevotional or indeed positively irreverent. Apply these methods to Italian comic opera, being careful to employ singers who are incapable of pronouncing even English with distinction, and we get the results that may be observed on those rare occasions when the London

season has a chance of seeing "Figaro" or "Don Giovanni." Companies which act in English or German often solve the problem by substituting spoken dialogue for recitative; but "Figaro" is the only one of Mozart's operas in which such a proceeding can be tolerated, and even in the case of "Figaro" so drastic a cure involves the sacrifice of a good many characteristically Mozartian beauties. When we come to consider "Così fan tutte," we shall see that to sacrifice the recitative is almost as horrible a mutilation as it would be to keep the recitative and sacrifice the arias.

A sharp distinction has to be drawn, at any rate in Mozart's earlier works, and in all the operas of his predecessors, between *recitativo secco* and what is called *recitativo stromentato*, *récitatif obligé* (Rousseau), or in English "accompanied recitative." Plain recitative (I suggest "plain" as the most convenient equivalent of *secco*) is supported simply on chords played by the harpsichord or any other instrument whose nature it is to strike chords of a more or less evanescent character. In a few cases we find these chords set out for strings, but sustained in exactly the same way as the slow-moving basses of plain recitative. This is what Rousseau calls *récitatif accompagné;* it does not alter the character of the recitative, but merely gives the background a particular tone-colour. Rousseau's definition of *récitatif obligé* is so admirable that I cannot do better than quote it here, since it explains the whole principle of the form. "C'est celui qui, entremêlé de Ritournelles et de traits de Symphonie, *oblige* pour ainsi dire le Récitant et l'Orchestre l'un envers l'autre, en sorte qu'ils doivent être attentifs et

s'attendre mutuellement. L'Acteur agité, transporté d'une passion qui ne lui permet pas de tout dire, s'interrompt, s'arrête, fait des réticences, durant lesquelles l'Orchestre parle pour lui; et ces silences, ainsi remplis, affectent infiniment plus l'Auditeur que si l'Acteur disoit lui-même tout ce que la Musique fait entendre."

This is the definition of a Frenchman with a passion for all Italian musical ideas. The Italian composer concentrating his attention, as I have said before, on the one single personality which happens to hold the stage, uses the orchestra to express those emotions which the character represented was supposed to be incapable of expressing vocally owing to his exalted state of passion. And so we find in the earlier Italian operas that accompanied recitative is employed only at those moments when the singer is represented as being incapable of controlling himself. Accompanied recitative, in the hands of a second-rate composer, soon became quite as dull and conventional as *recitativo secco:* worse, indeed, because the stock formulæ pretended to a greater degree of expressiveness. In the hands of German composers its conventionalism was disguised by a more symphonic treatment of the orchestra. The temptation of German composers—we see it in Holzbauer, in Gluck, and even in Mozart at times—was to exaggerate the part played by the orchestra, and, either from an insufficient dramatic sense or from an insufficient mastery of symphonic technique, to let the orchestra and singer carry on a sort of *stichomuthia*, which is often both tediously monotonous in rhythm, and destructive of the dramatic effect, at least from an Italian and individualistic point of view.

The aria is another Italian form which modern audiences profess to find undramatic. Yet if they would confess the truth frankly, it is the arias, or the movements of aria character, which have secured the immortality of all the well-known operas. Our historians reprint and reprint again the preface to Gluck's "Alceste," but what draws the public to hear Gluck's "Orfeo" is the agreeable melody of "Che farò" and the dignified grace of the ballet-music. Mozart and Verdi have shown us that the most intensely dramatic music is that which is most vocal, because the most vocal music is *ipso facto* the most human and the most direct in its appeal to us. Far be it from me to defend the old-fashioned opera-goer for whom "Don Giovanni" is summed up in "Batti, batti" and "Là ci darem la mano" (how many old-fashioned opera-goers, I wonder, can quote the succeeding lines of either?), but there are plenty of enthusiastic "Wagnerites" for whom, quite rightly, the memorable moments of "The Ring" are Brünnhilde's address to Siegmund, Wotan's invocation of Erda, and the well-known extracts that figure in concert-programmes. Wagner's arias appeal to us because we regard his musical language more or less as that of our own day; Gluck's arias appeal to us because they are so extraordinarily simple, and require no mental effort of us. The arias of "Idomeneo," on the other hand, do require a mental effort, for they are full of the most delicate and expressive detail. Some of this detail will indeed make its impression on any hearer at once; but many modern listeners will feel troubled and hampered by the extended and symmetrical form of the arias. There are indeed certain places in which Mozart did

undoubtedly commit an error of judgment, out of desire to please his singers and players, although his original audience was in all probability more lenient in its criticism than we should be. The more symphonic the mind of the composer, the more he tends to prefix long introductions to his arias, and to treat them as if they were concertos, instead of remembering that the concerto is merely an "aria" transferred to an instrument. Moreover, the Mannheim *virtuosi* were rather spoilt children, and considered themselves quite as important as the singers, so that we find, both in Holzbauer's "Günther von Schwarzburg" and in Mozart's "Idomeneo" and "Die Entführung," too many airs with *obbligato* parts for certain solo instruments. Not that Mozart ever allows the instruments to overload the voice; but a composition for three or four soloists must of necessity be longer in the exposition of its ideas than a composition for one, and the result is that we get a series of interminable introductions that may delight the musician, but present almost insoluble problems to the stage-manager. The tendency is of course seen at its worst in the operas of Cherubini. Yet the mere fact of the device surviving to so late a date is proof that audiences enjoyed it; and one has only to attend a performance of "Lucia" or "I Lombardi" in a provincial Italian theatre to note the frantic enthusiasm that is always aroused by certain lengthy solos for harp or violin.

We need, however, in listening to early Mozart, to make the effort to correct our first unthinking impressions of the aria form and its offence against dramatic truth. A modern listener is of course indifferent, and perhaps rightly so, to the historical fact

that the arias of "Idomeneo" are dramatically a great advance on the operatic arias of the older composers. He is indifferent too to the fact that this recitative-and-aria system was also a necessary stage in the development of the later and (as he likes to think) more really dramatic style of Weber and Wagner. But it is also true that the modern listener is not as a rule prepared to give much attention to details in an opera. A Wagner opera is indeed so full of detail that even trained musicians who have heard it often find it a strain to attempt to grasp every point as it passes: and a Weber opera has so little, that the untrained can take in all that there is at a first hearing. A Mozart opera, on the other hand, supposing it to be adequately performed, requires a careful attention from the listener. The remoteness of the style and the delicacy of the means employed oblige us to be actively on the look-out for what the composer has to tell us, not just passively receptive of whatever he likes to fling at our heads. If we have paid due attention to the fine shades of meaning expressed in the recitative, our minds will be more prepared for the heightened stimulus of the arias, with their orchestral accompaniments and their wealth of vocal expression; moreover, the contrast between declamation and pure singing is, of course, much more marked than it ever is in modern opera. For the general structure of the arias and similar numbers is deliberately planned with a view to their being set in a background of *recitativo secco;* in the recitative the musical effect is at a minimum, and therefore it has to be at a maximum in the arias, at such a maximum that we can afford to let declamation go, and can, nay must, for our proper understanding of

the musical ideas, allow ourselves all the space and leisure for their exposition that is afforded by an extended symphonic construction. The long introductions, the repetitions of first and second subjects, even the *concertante* instrumental solos, all these fall into their places as factors in the general scheme; the dramatic object of the aria is certainly to illustrate and emphasize some particular emotional state of a character, but, given the general principles of musical expression at the particular date, the desired illustration and emphasis can only be obtained by a certain conventional arrangement of structure. A single bar of a Mozart aria may sometimes be so expressive as to make us modern listeners think that its message is conveyed complete in that single bar; but the experienced musician will know that the full musical (and therefore dramatic) significance of that single bar is only intelligible when it is viewed in relation to the whole aria. The course of an opera is, in fact, like a stream running for long stretches in a narrow channel, hidden perhaps at times underground, perhaps suddenly dashing over a precipice, and at frequent intervals broadening out into a vast and tranquil lake. The forms are various which it presents, as are the types of landscape with which it is associated; nevertheless, broad or narrow, shallow or profound, it is always moving onwards and gathering force until it reaches its ultimate goal.

CHAPTER IV

"IDOMENEO"—II

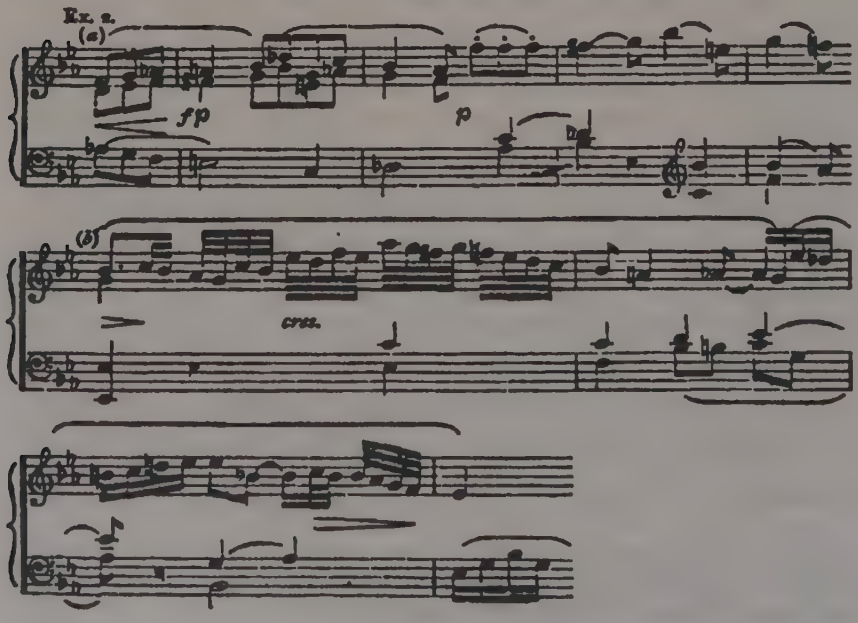
THE first thing that strikes us about "Idomeneo" is the nobility and dignity of its entire conception. The overture itself is enough to show the exalted view which Mozart took of *opera seria*, and never for a single moment in the whole opera does the composer relax his intense seriousness. Nor is "Idomeneo" merely a cold and stately succession of formal movements. In his early attempts at serious opera, Mozart had at best attained a successful imitation of operatic externals; he was concerned, one would think, not with what his characters might have felt and suffered as human beings, but with what his singers were accustomed to find effective on the stage. In "Idomeneo" he was a man of twenty-five, who had had enough experience of life to be able to throw himself into the personalities of his stage-figures. We feel that the characters in "Idomeneo" are not merely *prima donna, primo uomo, tenore lirico* or *basso cantante*, but individuals with wills and passions of their own. There is not, of course, the delicate psychological detail that we find in "Figaro" and "Così fan tutte," or the sublime naturalness and simplicity of "Die Zauberflöte"—these would both have been foreign to the general style of the opera—but there is a monumental strength and a white heat of passion that we find in this early work and shall never find again. For "Idomeneo" is the first and last *opera seria* that represents the com-

plete and mature Mozart. Only once afterwards did he have the opportunity of writing a serious opera; but "La clemenza di Tito," in spite of some wonderful beauties, is the work of a broken and almost exhausted man. "Die Zauberflöte," as we shall see later on, belongs to no recognized category, and even if we consider the serious parts by themselves, they breathe the atmosphere not of tragedy but of mysticism.

It is absurd to talk of Mozart as a man who remained a child throughout his life, or as a polite composer who never sought to do more than please aristocratic audiences with a succession of graceful trivialities. Only in one sense can he be said to have been a child all his life, and that was in his passionate seriousness, in a complete self-abandonment to emotional impulse which at times (as in the Requiem) becomes positively hysterical. Both Stendhal, in his *Letters on Haydn*, and William Gardiner, his English translator, writing in the second decade of the nineteenth century, compare Mozart to the painter Domenichino.[1] Stendhal indeed says, "As for Mozart, Domenichino should have had a still stronger cast of melancholy to resemble him completely." In another passage he expresses the view that to him, contrary to the opinion of all Italy, the first serious opera extant is not Cimarosa's "Gli Orazii e Curiazii," but either "Idomeneo" or "La clemenza di Tito." We must make certain allowances for the romantic sentimentality of an Italianized Frenchman in the age of Byron, and we shall see when we come to consider "Don Giovanni" that even the early nineteenth century is not always a safe guide to the

[1] To realize Stendhal's point of view one must remember that he compares Pergolesi and Cimarosa to Raphael, Handel to Michael Angelo, Haydn to Tintoretto, and Gluck to Caravaggio.

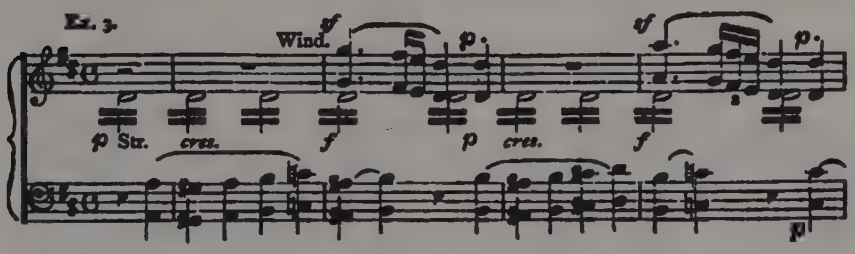
interpretation of the music of the eighteenth. But there can be no doubt, even to a cold-blooded critic of the twentieth century, about the intensity of emotional expression in such works as the G minor quintet, the fugue in C minor for two pianofortes, the fantasia in F minor for a mechanical organ, and many of the later pianoforte concertos, to mention only such works as are well known to modern amateurs. These are, it is true, almost all products of Mozart's later life, but they will be useful guides to us in our attempt to understand the poetic significance of his earlier output. If we look at the compositions which are more or less contemporaneous with "Idomeneo," we may at any rate trace the germs of this characteristically Mozartian emotionalism in the early violin sonatas (notably those in E major and G minor, and even in some of the often despised sonatas for pianoforte. We need only recall the slow movement of the sonata in B flat, with its poignant dramatic effects:



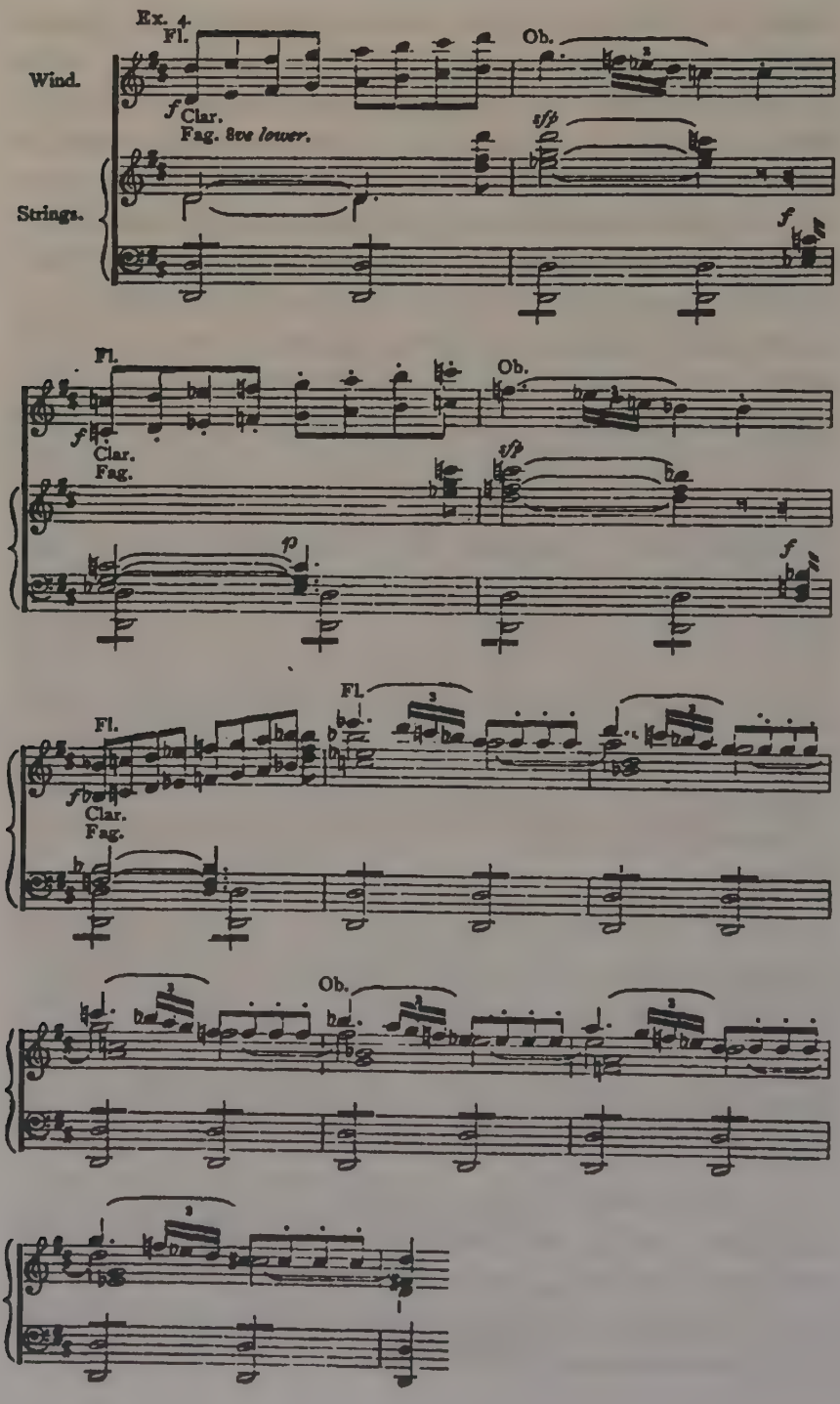
(and here let me repeat once more, that the player must consider the music as the recollection of a singer's voice), or the sonata in A minor, in all three of its movements, to realize what intense feeling underlay that apparently cheerful and courtly exterior.

It is, however, to the opera that we must turn if we wish to see the young Mozart at his greatest heights.

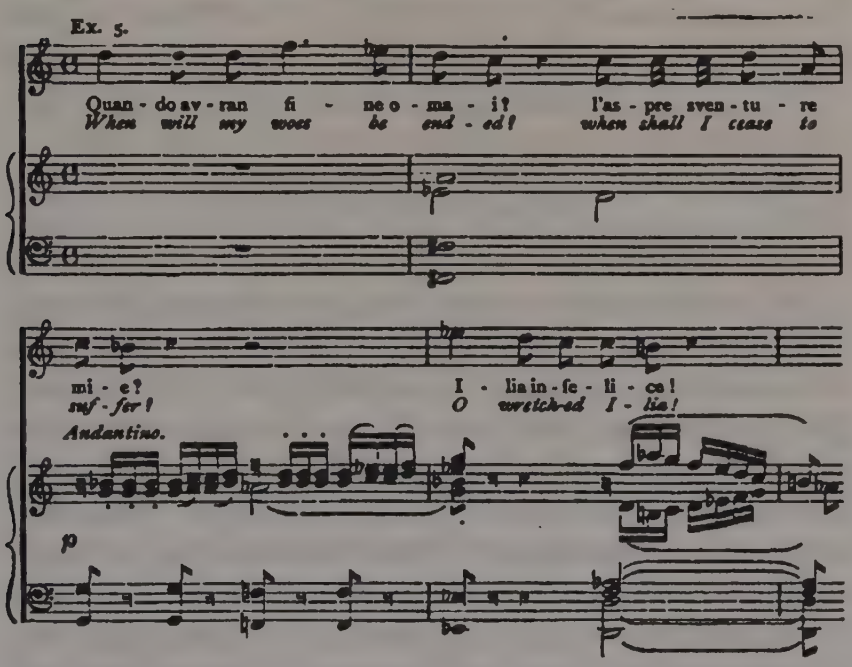
The opening bars of the overture indicate at once the heroic plane on which the drama is to move. It starts with a dignified assertion of the chord of D major, but the frequent use of minor harmonies, and a second subject, of a more pathetic character, in the minor instead of the more usual major mode of the dominant key, prepare us for tragedy. The construction is unusual: the second subject is not repeated after the return to the first, and its place is taken by a long and expressive coda based on a short and characteristic theme, which reappears again several times in the course of the opera. We find it first almost at the beginning of the overture—a cry of flutes and oboes against the creeping approach of the strings :—



A *crescendo* of the same two themes, based on a dominant pedal, leads to the return of the first subject, and the coda, first on a dominant pedal, then on a tonic pedal, develops it still further, supported by a bold succession of harmonies :—


Ex. 4.
Fl.
Ob.
Wind.
f
Clar.
Fag. 8va lower.
sfp
Strings.
f
Fl.
Ob.
f
Clar.
Fag.
sfp
fp
f
Fl.
Fl.
fp
Clar.
Fag.
Ob.

The throb of the double-basses dies away, the strings and the solitary oboe settle quietly down in a couple of sighing phrases on to the chord of D; the curtain has risen, and we see Ilia, a lonely little figure in the vast perspectives of the royal apartments. We must imagine the scene not as our classical archæologists might reconstruct it for us according to the evidence of the latest excavations, nor even as it might have been visualized by Leighton or Albert Moore, but in that strange and delightful mixture of modern and baroque which we find in the frescoes of Tiepolo. Her first phrase shows us her character:


Ex. 5.
Quan - do av - ran fi - ne o - ma - i? l'as - pre sven - tu - re
When will my woes be end - ed! when shall I cease to
mi - e?
suf - fer!
I - lia in - fe - li - ce!
O wretched I - lia!
Andantino.
p

gentle and yielding by nature, she tries by the recollection of her race's overthrow to work herself up to the desire of due revenge upon Idomeneo and the Cretans. But other feelings are at work within her; she cannot forget the king's son, Idamante, who saved

her from drowning. She has never dared reveal her love, and she fears that his is given to Electra, the terrible woman—a Greek too—who knows no obstacle to the fulfilment of her desires. She feels herself surrounded on all sides by enemies, torn asunder by conflicting emotions; the recitative rises to its climax, and the two conventional chords of cadence by a stroke of genius fall into place as an integral part of the introduction which leads straight into her aria. Varesco has here provided ideally suitable words for the composer's purpose :—

Padre, germani, addio!
Voi foste, io vi perdei.
Grecia, cagion tu sei,
E un greco adorerò?
D'ingrata al sangue mio
So che la colpa avrei;
Ma quel sembiante, oh Dei!
Odiare ancor non so.

The lines fall at once into two groups, forming the "first and second subjects" for the aria; and whereas the second quatrain divides into two long and flowing phrases, the first is broken up into a number of short exclamations, which the composer can turn both to dramatic and musical advantage. The dramatic advantage is, of course, obvious to any reader without the music; the musician will see how such short groups of syllables, depending for their expression not on continuous melodic beauty but on well-marked rhythm and general contour of declamation, provide the composer with opportunities for free harmonic treatment, and consequently for a heightening of the emotional effect when the subject returns, according to rule, half-way through the aria. If the reader will

have the patience to analyse this one aria in detail, both from the technical and the emotional standpoint, he will be in a position to understand the principles of expression on which any aria of Mozart is based. We must especially note the dramatic outburst on the word "Grecia," and observe how its effect is intensified by the movement of the harmony on its reappearance, and we must note also the recurrence (in the bass) of the figure quoted in Examples 3 and 4 at the words "D'ingrata al sangue mio." There is no need to call it a *leitmotiv* or to label it with any ridiculous name. Its significance is purely musical; but we shall find it employed in various places, and always at moments of tragic import, connected generally with the love of Ilia and Idamante.

Ilia's aria, it will be noticed, has no introduction beyond a few chords, no instrumental interludes between the themes, or even before the return of the first subject, and no coda. This is no doubt designed in order to make the audience feel at once that they are in the middle of the drama. It is not until the action has got well under way that the composer can afford to broaden out his arias into a more imposing symphonic construction. Ilia has hardly had time to finish her concluding shake before she sees Idamante approaching, and breaks off into recitative. Idamante speaks to his attendants as he enters, and the accompanying chords are purposely disconnected from what precedes. But as soon as he turns to speak to Ilia, the accompaniment falls again into the key in which she left off before his entrance. Varesco's dialogue is generally stiff and long-winded, but Mozart has done his best to make the two characters distinct—Ilia passionate and agitated, Idamante self-possessed

and dignified, though without the least pompousness or exaggeration. He indicates his admiration in rather formal terms: Ilia thinks it her duty to repel the advances of her hereditary enemy. Idamante replies with an aria of some length, the words of which are rather conventional. But we must not lay too much stress on the eighteenth-century code of operatic manners, which bade young men always offer to commit suicide then and there if the "cruel fair" would only condescend to honour them by requesting a performance of the operation. Even Mozart's music does not in this case break down the musical convention of the period; but if Idamante presents himself unmistakably as a soprano hero of eighteenth-century opera, he is at any rate as good a specimen of his tribe as we shall be able to find. He is perhaps a little too heroic; but whether he be sympathetic or not, his music all belongs to the character, and there is never the least suggestion of the aria being written to show off a singer's technique, for the *cadenza* at the end is no less legitimate as a means of expression in an aria than it is in a concerto for violin or pianoforte.

The Trojan prisoners are brought in; the fleet of Idomeneo has been sighted, and the king's safe return is to be celebrated by their liberation and reconciliation with their captors. Trojans and Cretans unite together in a chorus of rejoicing, to the indignation of Electra, who enters at this moment. She is, however, interrupted almost at once by the advent of Arbace with the news that Idomeneo has been wrecked off the coast of his own island kingdom. Idamante, Ilia and the people hasten to the shore, and Electra remains behind to give vent to her

jealousy, fearing that, if the king is dead, there will be no authority to prevent his son from giving his hand to the despised captive, the daughter of Priam.

It has often been pointed out that "Idomeneo" was influenced by Gluck's operas, and principally by "Alceste," for which Mozart is known to have had a very great admiration. There are, indeed, various moments in the opera which are obviously imitated from scenes of "Alceste"; but for the recitatives and arias of Electra, Gluck was quite incapable of providing a model. Mozart left Paris too early to hear "Armide," but we may be sure that he studied the score of it; yet the wildest outbursts of Armide and the furies seem almost childish in comparison with the utterances of Electra's savage jealousy. Mozart has certainly adopted Gluck's declamatory, almost barbarous and unvocal style of phrase, but whereas Gluck's rhythm always became monotonous, and his management of purely musical technique often fumbling and helpless, Mozart's absolute mastery of all symphonic resources enables him to pile up his phrases to a well-defined climax, to contrast the brute force of diatonic harmony with the anguished wail of gliding chromatics. This first aria of Electra's is in the usual binary form; but how unearthly is the effect when the first subject returns not in D minor, as we should expect, but a whole tone lower! The transposition not only brings about a darkening of the key-colour, but the return to the right key later necessitates an additional step in a sequence of piercing cries, which ingeniously produces the effect of a much stronger climax than would have been obtained by precisely the same note had it been approached (by two steps

instead of three) from the starting-point of the original D minor.

The binary form of aria, based like a sonata movement on two subjects of contrasting character, presented a peculiarity which often exposed the weakness of an inferior composer, while to a clever man it offered great opportunities for effective treatment. It is obvious that if the second subject suits a certain voice when it appears first in the key of the dominant, it will probably be much too high or much too low when transposed into the key of the tonic. A careful composer will therefore at least take the precaution of designing his second subject so as to be most effective in the latter key; but the man of genius will be able to make his subject fully effective in the dominant, and increase the effect of it at its return by free yet logical modifications of it. This is what Mozart very frequently does; and he is materially assisted in his reconstruction of the voice part by his power of handling the orchestra, so as to make the one enhance the effect of the other.

This insistence upon technical details may perhaps have annoyed the unlearned reader, who feels, not without justice, that he does not want to be on the look-out for ingenuities of contrivance when listening to a masterpiece. But these devices, whether we call them tricks of the trade or, more charitably, the fruits of accumulated experience, are part of the language of music, and in the hands of a musician like Mozart are made, like figures of rhetoric, to serve a genuine poetic purpose.

Electra at the end of her aria leaves the stage, and the storm of her passions grows in the orchestra

to a real tempest. The scene changes quickly, and we are transported to the seashore. The music runs on without break into a chorus of men imploring the mercy of the gods, echoed by a distant chorus of shipwrecked sailors, the first accompanied by restless passages for violins, the second by smooth scale passages for wood-wind. It was Varesco's intention that the storm should be made to subside by the appearance of Poseidon himself, Idomeneo's appeal to him being indicated in dumb show. Mozart, possibly on the advice of Quaglio the scene-painter, disregarded this direction altogether, and the few bars that intervene between the end of the chorus and Idomeneo's landing would hardly give time for a representation of this kind. We may note that the division of the chorus into two groups was entirely Mozart's idea. The storm is short but very vividly represented; as the chorus disperse and the waters subside, the king lands from a boat with his attendants, whom he dismisses at once. He has no sooner explained in a soliloquy the nature of his unfortunate vow than Idamante enters. It is this dialogue between father and son which Mozart felt obliged to cut down owing to the incompetence of his singers. The scene is certainly long, but Leopold was perhaps not in the wrong when he urged Mozart not to shorten it, since in the hands of good actors the gradual development of the dramatic situation would be extremely moving. In Handel's "Jephthah" the unhappy father sees his daughter approaching, drives her from him at once, and is obliged on the spot to explain everything to the other characters. Varesco's idea, which would not have suited an oratorio, but is well adapted to the stage, was to let the

audience into the secret at once, but to keep the other characters in the dark until the end of the opera. He seizes very happily on the fact that Idomeneo has not seen his son, nor he his father, for many years. They meet as strangers, and the sight even of an unknown man is enough to make Idomeneo begin to realize the horror of his position. Idamante laments the loss of his father, whom he believes to be drowned; Idomeneo feels himself more and more strangely attracted to the youth, until he suddenly discovers him to be his own son. The emotion is too strong for him (it is at this moment, of course, that Mozart brings in the instruments to accompany the recitative); he cannot help revealing himself, although he realizes, directly the words have passed his lips, that by doing so he has cut off his only chance of saving his son's life. He turns in horror from his son's embrace, and warns him never to approach his presence. Idamante is distracted. No sooner has he found his father than he has lost him; what can have caused his anger? can it be Idamante's love for the Trojan captive? The aria with which the scene closes is more characteristic than that which Idamante sings at the beginning of the act; the feeling expressed is more human and direct, and Idamante has by this time become a more definite individual. The simplicity of the melodic outline, and the quick alternations of major and minor in the same key give us a very clear idea of Idamante's personality—impulsive and heroic, but at the same time youthful and free from all psychological complication.

A strong contrast is provided at this point by the entry of the Cretan warriors who have returned with

Idomeneo from Troy, accompanied by the women of the people. They disembark to a brilliant march, which is followed by a long choral movement headed *ciaccona*. This is, of course, a sudden transition from Italian to French ideals. The *chaconne* is a favourite device in the operas of Rameau and Gluck for bringing an act to an animated conclusion. Mozart's movement does not follow the French models at all exactly in construction, and probably was not intended to be danced in the same way. There is a duet for two sopranos in the middle, contrasting in rhythm and character with the rest, and the whole was probably designed mainly as a magnificent spectacular representation of a popular religious ceremony.

The second act opens with a scene between Idomeneo and Arbace. The king discloses his secret, and the wise councillor advises that Idamante be sent to another country. Idomeneo decides to evade his vow by letting the prince accompany Electra back to Greece. This scene was put in mainly for the benefit of Panzacchi, who sang the part of Arbace, and concludes with a very conventional aria for that personage. Arbace departs to make the necessary arrangements, and Ilia enters to pay her respects to Idomeneo. He assures her of his friendship and of his desire to make amends for what she has suffered. She replies that she has found a second home in Crete and a second father in Idomeneo. The aria in which she gives expression to these feelings is one of great beauty. Mozart, like Beethoven, had very definite associations with certain keys. This is not the place in which to attempt a discussion of the curious and complicated question of whether every

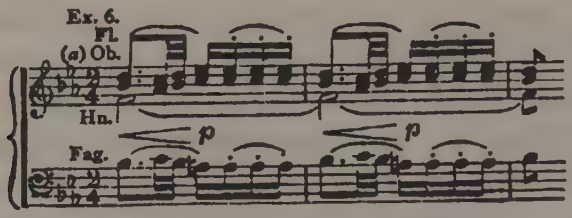
key has its peculiar emotional colour—a question which has often been answered in a summary manner, either negatively or affirmatively, but which I do not think has ever been investigated on a basis of historical research—the only means by which a reasonable answer could be obtained. But all readers will agree that for Beethoven the key of C minor at any rate has a very definite character—we need only recall the three pianoforte sonatas in that key, the violin sonata, the pianoforte concerto, the early string quartet, and, chief of all, the fifth symphony. For Mozart the best-defined keys seem to be G minor and E flat major. The two great symphonies are characteristic of each; and if we want further illustration, we may turn for G minor to the string quintet, the pianoforte quartet, the slow movement of the pianoforte concerto in B flat, and Pamina's aria in the second act of "Die Zauberflöte," while for E flat major we may study the concluding chorus and the overture of the same opera, the violin sonata, the Countess's first aria in "Figaro," and the slow movements of the symphony and quintet in G minor. These last, indeed, show the two keys in close poetic connection; and it is just the same connection that we may observe between this aria of Ilia and that with which the opera opens. When she first came before us, gentle and unhappy, conscious of her utter weakness in the presence of an overmastering fate, Mozart chooses for her the key of G minor; he takes E flat major to paint the same gentle heroine after Idomeneo has dried her tears and given her a sense of serenity and confidence for the future. For the sake of his friends in the orchestra, Mozart has accompanied this aria with four solo wind-instruments.

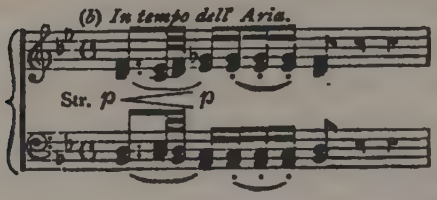
The aria is an exquisitely finished piece of construction, besides being full of real poetic feeling. But considered as an episode in an opera, one cannot help noticing that the rather long introduction, necessary as it is to introduce the instrumental soloists, and still more justified as it is by the new interest given to the same passages on the entrance of the voice, is a hindrance to the drama. The audiences of Mozart's day, being accustomed to regard the convention as still in force between them and their composers, were probably not in the least disturbed at seeing the heroine stand still before the footlights till the introduction was over. Paër's little comic opera "Le maître de chapelle" tells us how it was done—

Gertrude. Mais, Monsieur, que fera
Cléopâtre la belle
Pendant le temps que durera
Cette éternelle ritournelle?
Barnabé. Bon, elle se promenera
En prenant des airs de princesse,
Ainsi qu'on fait à l'Opéra.
Gertrude. J'entends.
Barnabé. Commence, le temps presse.

Mozart no doubt did not feel the unsatisfactoriness of this as we do. But he knew how to turn the most unexpected things to dramatic account. As Ilia leaves the stage, Idomeneo ponders upon her words; it flashes across him that she loves his son, that her love is returned, and that Poseidon will have not one victim, but three, since neither he nor Ilia can bear to live without Idamante. The recitative is marked "in tempo dell' aria," and opens with a theme that

has been played by the solo wind-instruments, given now to the strings.





Its harmony is given a more threatening character, and the alteration of the rhythm shows more plainly its relation to the theme which we have already noticed in the overture and in Ilia's first aria.

Idomeneo's aria which follows is, of course, the great show-piece of the opera, in which Raaff was to do his best to live up to the triumphs of his youth. The old gentleman expressed complete satisfaction with it, and Mozart writes that he was absolutely in love with it, and sang it over every night before he went to bed, and every morning when he woke up! No wonder he was pleased with it, for it was evidently composed with the greatest care. It is designed so as to show off Raaff's technique and style to the best advantage, without ever putting too great a strain upon him. Mozart must have been in one of his amiably malicious moods when he wrote to ask Varesco for another aria for Raaff in Act III, because "in the aria 'Fuor del mare' he cannot do himself justice as he used." The aria never goes

above the high G, and seldom requires even that effort; the *coloratura* is admirably smooth and laid on with a free hand, while the orchestra is most ingeniously handled in such a way as to make a great impression of power and brilliance without ever engaging the singer in an unequal battle.

One reason, and that a most important one, why an aria of this kind inevitably induces modern critics to shake their heads over the vanity of singers and the degraded state of Italian opera in the eighteenth century, is that we moderns never have the chance of hearing arias of this type sung as their composers imagined them. There are perhaps a few men, and a fair number of women, who if put to it can vocalize the *coloratura* accurately; but opera-goers know well that even a woman who can make *coloratura* sound really spontaneous and expressive is almost as rare a phenomenon as a second Mozart. The modern tenor, even the most finished and lyrical in style, does not cultivate *coloratura*. He can sing the notes, it may be, but the modern repertory has not given him any chance of grasping their intellectual significance. If Idomeneo were performed to-day this splendid aria would probably either be trotted through by some pleasant Englishman with an agreeable voice and a total disregard of consonants (to say nothing of a total ignorance of the Italian language), or torn to fragments by a vigorous Teuton ready to sacrifice any beauty of phrase to the energetic declamation of words which are fatuous enough in Italian, and whose fatuity becomes positively grotesque when rendered into the bombast of German translation. We must in judging it accept definitely the Italian position, and be ready to concentrate our attention exclusively on

Idomeneo; we must feel that singing is his natural way of expressing himself, and that the particular song represents not so much a moment in a drama as a summary of his entire personality, while the other characters, the whole drama itself, are for the moment at any rate no more than a neutral background against which there may stand out that one magnificent and heroic figure. Even the orchestra, which in Ilia's aria, for instance, was treated with such a wonderful wealth of detail, becomes here completely subservient. In that case it was the deliberately designed personality of those solo wind-instruments that made the singer, by virtue of her human voice, stand in relief against them. In Idomeneo's aria the instruments are employed not to contrast with the voice, but to support it—to bolster up old Raaff's weakness in these particular circumstances—and at any rate to give the audience the illusion that the singer is not matching his powers against the orchestra, but positively doing all the work of it himself. There are, of course, plenty of concertos, especially violin concertos, in which the same illusion is created. A pianoforte, by its complete difference of tone-colour as well as by its complete independence of personality, is in a different position, and more generally takes the line, in a concerto, of combating the orchestra; the orchestra may seem to admire, to worship perhaps, but the solo instrument is always a thing apart, a being of a different race. The violin, on the other hand, is a national hero; the orchestra know that he is one of themselves. He has therefore a harder struggle for individuality in those parts of the concerto where the two forces are in opposition; but when once the solo instrument has won his battle, he

does not merely conquer but convinces, and even inspires those who once rebelled against him. But the voice—I speak, of course, of ideal singers—is both god and man. It is a thing apart from the orchestra; but we have only to hear one human note to realize that the pianoforte's claim to divinity is fictitious; and the voice can inspire and lead the orchestra better than any violin, because although they know that it is not one of themselves, it represents the ideal of musical expression to which they are all striving, the spirit in whose image they were made.

Idomeneo's great aria is followed by a short scene for Electra, who has heard of his intentions, and now feels sure that Idamante will be hers. With his usual felicity, Mozart has utilized in the recitative a subsidiary theme from the aria; this last is on a small scale, accompanied by strings only. Electra presents herself to us in a new light. She has no fears for the future, and the prospect of happiness has made her forget the past and view the present with serenity. This new aspect of Electra's character is due entirely to Mozart; Varesco's words, if they indicate anything, seem to indicate a less sympathetic view of her. It may be said that Mozart merely wanted to give Elisabeth Wendling a quiet type of song; but in any case he was right dramatically in letting the audience see Electra in a more attractive light for this second act. As she concludes her aria, there break in upon her ear and ours the strains of a distant march that calls her to the harbour to embark for Greece. The ingenious composer makes the march start in the middle, and return later to what is really its beginning. We see now why Electra's air was

accompanied by strings only, namely, in order that the wind should break in all together for the march; and the distant entry of the wind gives the fiddles just time to put on their mutes before they join in. The brass and drums are muted already; but Mozart wishes the march to grow louder and louder until the scene has changed, and therefore provides rests now and then during which they, and eventually the strings too, may remove their mutes again, so as to open the next scene with a sonorous burst of music.

We are at the harbour again; the ship is waiting, and the people invite Electra to embark with the well-known chorus "Placido è il mar, andiamo," the one movement of the opera which (in this country at any rate) is universally familiar. This is one of those moments where Mozart's cosmopolitanism shows to its greatest advantage—we have a stage picture worthy of Rameau, an Italian melody that makes us visualize the harbour of Cydonia as a mixture of Naples and Venice, and that German sense of pure musical thought which gives the whole its unearthly and magical beauty.

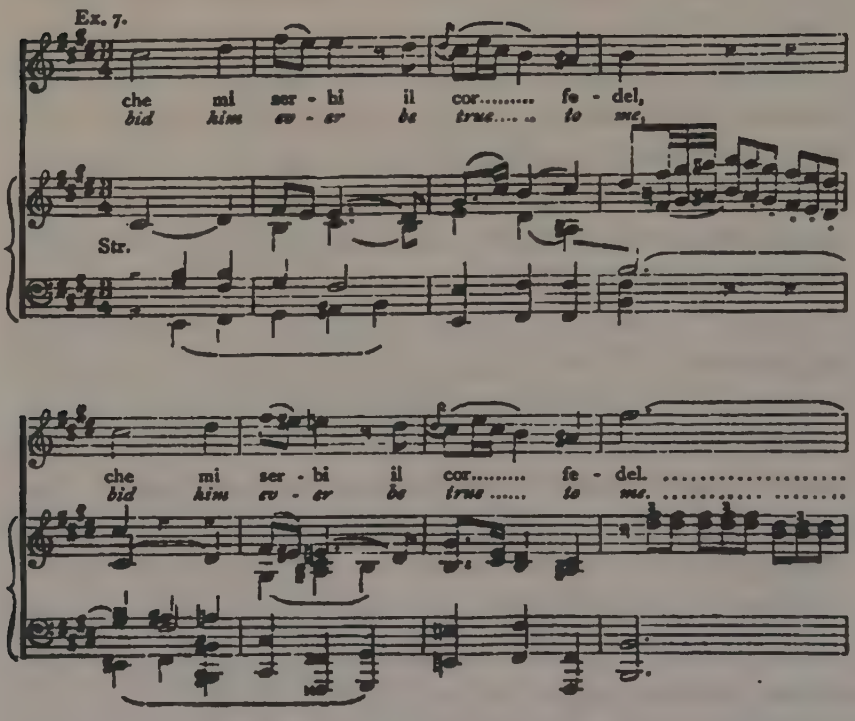
Idomeneo enters with Idamante; he and Electra take leave of the king in a trio. Electra herself is not without a strange sense of foreboding; Idamante is parting from Ilia without having dared to reveal his love, and still feels that a shadow has come between him and his father; Idomeneo does his best to hope against the inner conviction of his conscience. With a sort of half-frightened resolution the music quickens up as they move towards the boat, when suddenly without warning there bursts upon them the crash of a storm. A monster rises from the sea;

the terrified populace know then for certain that they are under a curse of heaven. "Who is the guilty one?" they ask, and three times the threatening scream of the wind-instruments echoes the cry. Idomeneo fearlessly admits that the guilty man is himself; he is willing to offer himself a sacrifice, but he knows that it will not be accepted. Yet he is defiant rather than penitent; if the god demands an innocent victim, he will not grant it—the god himself is unjust. The orchestra rises to an outburst of rage; Idomeneo knows that he is blaspheming, but love is stronger for him than religion. The people, understanding nothing, disperse in terror as the storm continues, and the curtain falls on Idomeneo standing as it were at bay before the angry sea, while the cries of the fugitives die gradually away in the distance.

The third act begins with a soliloquy of Ilia. Her character undergoes considerable development in the course of the opera. In the first act she was still a Trojan princess bound in duty to hate her Cretan captors; in the second she began to realize that Idomeneo and Idamante might bring her more happiness than she had ever known in Troy. We see her now wholly given up to her love. Not yet has she declared it; but she has at least admitted it to herself, and it has taken such complete possession of her that she has forgotten to be jealous any longer of Electra. There is a maturity and emotional depth about this aria which was not present in those of the preceding acts; the best illustration of this will be seen from the concluding phrase of the second theme, beautiful enough in its simple form, and made more intensely human by

the warm chromatic harmonies which accompany its repetition.

Ex. 7.



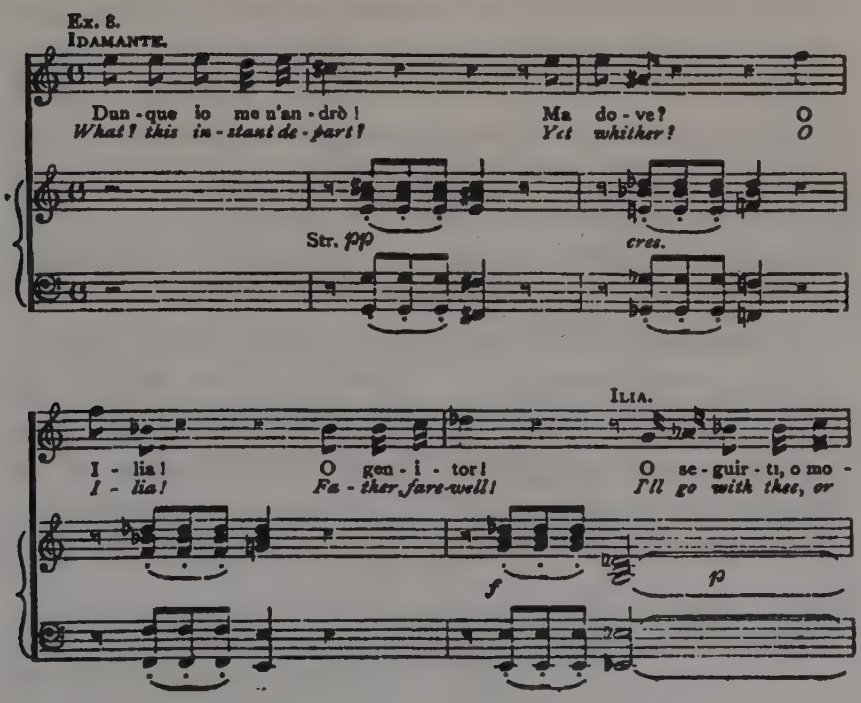
This is, of course, the purest Mozart; no Italian composer would ever have thought of so delicate and so poetical an effect, or if anyone had vaguely imagined the feeling which it expresses, he would have expressed it by a melodic variation of the voice part, not by a change of harmony.

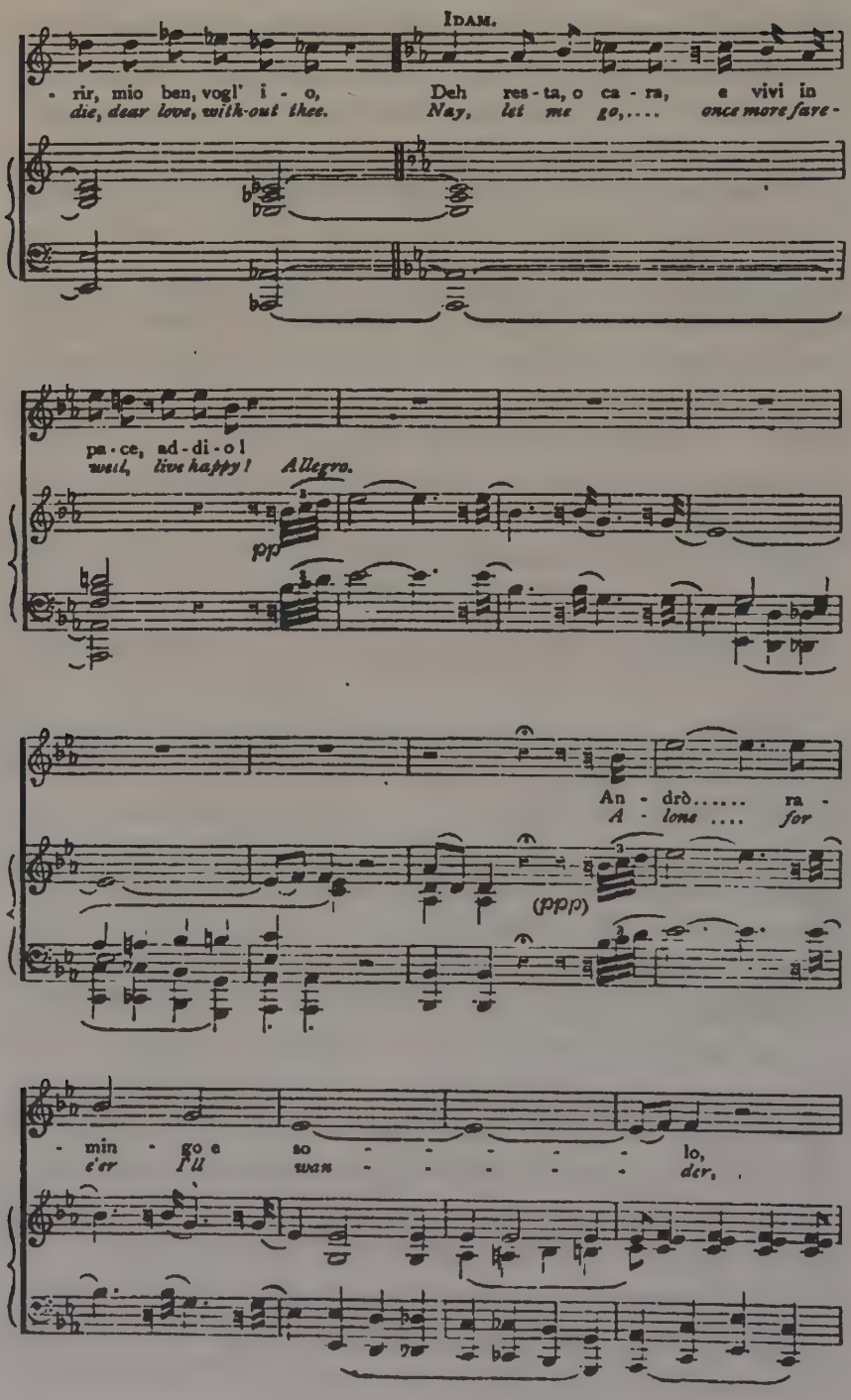
Idamante enters to take leave of Ilia before going out to slay the monster, perhaps to be slain himself. Ilia is led to declare her love, and the inevitable duet follows, the best part of it being the slow introductory movement, which once more makes an allusion to that theme of the overture which recurs so strangely in the course of the opera. At the end of the duet

the lovers are discovered by Idomeneo, who is followed closely by Electra. Once more Idamante begs his father to tell him the reason of his estrangement; once more Idomeneo hints mysteriously at the wrath of Poseidon, and bids his son depart, never to return. The thought begins to take shape in Ilia's mind that it is she who has aroused the anger of the god by winning the love of Idamante. Electra realizes that her last chance has gone, and her smouldering hatred begins to glow once more till it finally bursts into flame. Idamante must go. Ilia in a burst of emotion says that she will go with him; he gently puts her from him—

Farewell, live happy!
Alone for e'er I'll wander,
Seeking for death in exile
Till he releases me.

Ex. 8.




IDAM.
- rir, mio ben, vogl' i - o,
die, dear love, with-out thee.
Deh res-ta, o ca - ra, e vivi in
Nay, let me go,.... once more fare-
pa-ce, ad-di-o!
well, live happy! Allegro.
pp
An - drò..... ra -
A - lone .... for
(ppp)
- min - go e so - - - - - lo,
e'er I'll wan - - - - - der,

This is the great quartet for which Raaff wished an aria for himself to be substituted. Mozart seems however to have thought it the best movement of the opera, and we may heartily agree with him. It is indeed one of the most beautiful ensembles ever composed for any opera. Electra's fury, Idomeneo's despair, the tender resignation of the youthful lovers, all find utterance in it, now sharply individualized, now grouped in contrasting pairs, now joining all together in a common united expression of their mysterious consciousness of oppression by powers beyond their control, almost beyond their prayers. The strict symmetrical form of the movement gives it a classic dignity, and, as we have noted before, the necessary consideration for the compass of voices leads the composer into modulations of startling poetic power. A series of hurried imitative phrases at the end pile up the harmony to a climax; then after a pause Idamante once more repeats the initial phrase—"andrò ramingo e solo"—his voice breaks, he turns away, and the orchestra in a few sobbing phrases brings the movement to a pathetic close.

It is well to give a moment's consideration to the æsthetic and dramatic significance of this and similar movements. The idea of combining several characters to take part simultaneously in a formal movement at an instant of high dramatic tension seems to have originated with Alessandro Scarlatti.[1] It was carried on to some extent by his successors, but not with any great appreciation of its value, since average singers, as we see in the case of "Idomeneo," were

[1] See my *Alessandro Scarlatti* and two papers by me on "Ensembles and finales in eighteenth-century Italian opera," in the *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, 1910.

not in favour of an episode which gave them so much preliminary labour and so little opportunity for individual effect. It is in nineteenth-century opera that we shall see the greatest development of the principle. Ensembles of this kind must be carefully distinguished from concerted finales which are intended to lead up to the climax of an act, and which belonged originally only to comic operas. Most of Verdi's operas contain ensembles of the type we are discussing; the best-known example, of course, is the quartet in "Rigoletto," and there is another fine specimen in the third act of "Il trovatore" after the sudden entrance of Manrico. Still more beautiful is the quintet which precedes the death of Violetta in "La traviata."

In all these cases the dramatic action has reached an important crisis; the action is then suddenly held up, and a sort of tableau is formed, which can be maintained just so long as the composer is able to maintain the musical interest. A dramatist has, as a rule, no means of emphasizing a situation of this kind; and we cannot imagine the prompter or stage-manager coming forward at such a juncture to deliver a little lecture on the psychological significance of it. This is one of the moments at which the musician comes into his rights, and shows that the principles of musical drama need not always coincide with those of the drama without music. For the musician can perfectly well come forward and address the audience, at least through the vocal medium of his singers—not that we want to be conscious of the musician's own physical personality, but because we are able, through the medium of music, to be raised to a loftier point of view, to a plane on which we are conscious of the greater

power that ultimately controls the actions and the destinies of those characters whose developments we have been following with so close and so sympathetic an interest. They may have been heroes to us till now; during the ensemble we see them for a moment as mere puppets in the hands of fate.[1]

At this point the scene should rightly end, *i.e.* after Idamante's silent departure, which it is the object of the quartet to bring into prominence. Mozart, however, purely out of consideration for Panzacchi, the second tenor, has here made an opportunity—contrary indeed to even Varesco's better judgment—for bringing in an elaborate recitative and aria for Arbace. The music is full of beauty, and is not at all inappropriate to the play considered as a whole; but it forms a lamentable anti-climax to the quartet, and also delays the action of the drama just at the moment when we feel that it must quicken its pace. At the end of the aria Varesco intended the scene to change from the royal garden to the front of the palace, Idomeneo being discovered on a throne, attended by the high priest of Poseidon, and surrounded by the people. We have seen that there was a certain misunderstanding between Mozart and Varesco at this point. Mozart's long introduction certainly calls for some very definite and expressive

[1] The ensemble has, of course, its technical value as well. The gradual rising to a dramatic climax implies, at best, music more or less in the manner of the "development section" of a sonata, or (in the hands of an inferior composer) music that may be physiologically exciting but intellectually incoherent; it is therefore a great relief, after so rough an ascent, to find oneself on some sort of plateau, at a point of repose, where the musical element can assert itself after the predominance of the dramatic element. Moreover, the sound of four or five solo voices joining together in an ensemble produces a very remarkable effect of tone-colour, and has an emotional value quite impossible to describe in literary terms.

action in dumb show, but it is not clear what his precise intentions were. Probably the populace, who are supposed to be suffering from plague, such of them at least as have not already perished in their thousands, "buried before they died within the ample and filthy stomach" of the sea-monster (as the archbishop's chaplain elegantly expresses it), made some sort of a demonstration before the king, after which the high priest began his long allocution, which very evidently was inspired by the similar scene in Gluck's "Alceste," the same orchestral figure appearing in both places.

If Idomeneo was Italian in Act II, here he is completely French. We see before us not the individual but the stage picture, with the priest threatening and the king confessing before an excited and agonized crowd of suffering people. The people indeed have come into the play; they form the last great force which has been brought into action against Idomeneo's irresolution, and compel him to fulfil the horrible sacrifice which he has so long tried vainly to escape. Yet they suffer as much as he does at the thought of what is to take place; only at the end of the choral movement, as they disperse, a sudden little gleam of sunlight makes itself perceptible for a moment in the orchestra, before the priests enter to a subdued and solemn march, and the king begins the ceremony with a fervent prayer to Poseidon, answered in a strange monotoned chant by the ministrants at the altar.

A sudden burst of trumpets and a shout of voices is heard behind. The prince has killed the monster, and the people are rejoicing. Idomeneo's gloom only deepens—by the slaughter of the monster one sacrilege has been added to another. Idamante is led on

in triumph; but he has heard the story of his father's vow at last, and now of his own accord presents himself for sacrifice. The long recitative which follows is masterly both in declamation and in characterization; the serene yet youthful gravity of Idamante, reminding us rather of what Tamino was to be in later years, contrasts well with the passionate outbursts of Idomeneo, for it is this rash impulsiveness of Idomeneo that has brought about the whole tragedy, and it is the self-control and the childlike simplicity and directness of Idamante's character that is to save the tragedy from its dreadful completion.

Here again Varesco's unpractical libretto caused trouble. Idamante must naturally sing an aria before he is slaughtered, and when the self-sacrificing Ilia rushes in at the critical moment and insists on dying instead of him, their affectionate protestations must be elegantly disposed into the form of a duet. Mozart cut out the duet at once, but he set the first aria, "No, la morte io non pavento"; it was found however after rehearsal that the scene was too protracted. Mozart writes to his father on Jan. 18, 1781: "The rehearsal of the third act went off splendidly. People think that it is far superior even to the other two. Only the libretto is far too long, and consequently the music is too, as I have been saying all along; so Idamante's aria, 'No, la morte io non pavento,' must be cut out—and in any case it is not in the right place there. But the people who have heard the music to it are groaning over this, and still more over the fact that Raaff's last aria is cut too; but one must make a virtue of necessity." As soon as Ilia has thrown herself at the foot of the altar, a mysterious noise is heard, and the oracle

delivers judgment. Here again Mozart says, "The speech of the oracle is also much too long; I have shortened it, but Varesco need not know anything about this, as everything will be printed as he wrote it." There are, in fact, three versions of the oracle's pronouncement, one obviously much too long, and one (the only one printed in the Peters edition) cut down to the shortest possible limits. It is not clear which version was actually performed; for practical purposes the intermediate one is probably the best.

Following the example of Gluck, Mozart has accompanied his oracle with trombones. Since the days of Rossini and Spontini, the trombones have been used mostly for adding to the total strength of an orchestral *fortissimo;* and even in those rarer cases where a Schubert or a Wagner has shown what wonderful effects may be obtained by using them softly, they are always regarded as normal instruments of the orchestra, just as much as horns or bassoons. But just as we find Alessandro Scarlatti treating the horns as exotic instruments, only to be used on the stage itself, to produce the effect of a quite abnormal kind of music, so we find that in Mozart's time the trombones are regarded as being outside the ordinary orchestra, and generally suitable only to the expression of ideas connected with the supernatural. The result is that to an audience of Mozart's day the mere sound of trombones would be unfamiliar, and altogether different to the sound of orchestral music, much in the same way as the sound of an organ differs from the sound of an orchestra to our ears, and requires an altogether different kind of attention from us. It is indeed so different, under certain circumstances, as to be positively disconcerting, and

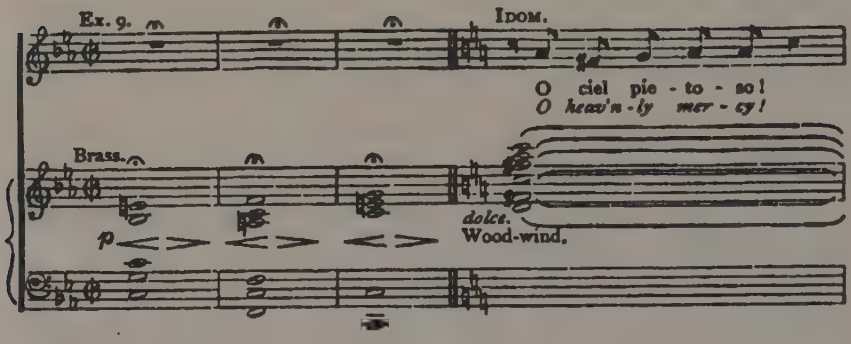
to cause us to feel a distinct sense of relief to the nerves when the sound has ceased, and the ordinary instruments resume their control of our understanding.

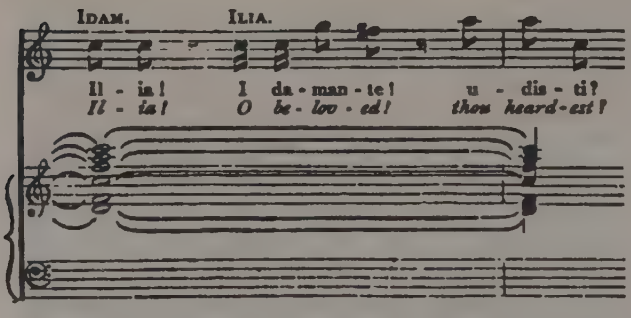
It is this "disconcerting" effect that comes out so strongly in Mozart's use of the trombones, and makes them so appropriate to the atmosphere of mystery and religion.[1] Mozart indeed never uses them for any other purpose; and we shall find them employed for still more tremendous effects in his later operas. It is in the same sense that we must understand Beethoven's trombone parts, especially in the C minor, Pastoral and Choral Symphonies, where their function is almost always to emphasize the essentially solemn and religious character of movements which otherwise might have been differently interpreted.

The impressive effect of the trombones accompanying the oracle in "Idomeneo" is increased by the peculiar way in which Mozart has treated them. They play for the most part single chords, punctuating the vocal phrases; but these chords are sustained for some length, and each is carefully marked with a *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. Only towards the end do we find groups of three sustained chords, each group starting softly and rising to a *fortissimo*, the whole ending with long held notes, each of which is swelled and diminished as before. The instruments suggest as it were the miraculous animation of Poseidon's statue, as its huge breast of bronze begins to heave, and then, after the climax of its utterance, lapses once

[1] The trombone had, of course, its religious associations just as the organ has now. But it must be remembered that in the sixteenth century, when trombones were habitually employed in churches, they were employed just as much in secular music on a large scale. See the Rev. F. W. Galpin's paper on "The Sackbut," *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, vol. xxxiii.

more into rigidity when the god no longer breathes into its nostrils the breath of life. As the statue ceases to breathe, those who stood breathless before it come back to life, with little broken phrases of wonder and joy.





The simplicity of the treatment is most moving; an aria or even a more developed recitative would be out of place. It is only Electra, her hopes now shattered for ever, whose jealousy and rage must find their last volcanic outlet. Her harsh voice breaks in rudely on the holy calm of the others as she calls upon the Furies to let her share the torment of Ajax and Orestes; she rushes away, the orchestra closing with a passionate distortion of the sighing phrases which ended the overture, and we see her no more.

The last scene opens with a solemn and gracious phrase in the violins, alluding once again to that char-

acteristic figure of the overture which we have so often observed in the course of the opera, imitated canonically by each of the other strings in turn. Idomeneo ascends his throne for the last time, and addresses his assembled subjects. He presents to them formally their new ruler, with his royal bride, in a dignified recitative, the accompaniment of which is, as often happens, skilfully developed out of the figures of the introduction. "O Creta fortunata! O me felice!" —happy Crete! happy Idomeneo! His conscience is at peace, his mind unburdened, and he feels like some old tree when the spring has wakened it into leaf once more.[1] Thus he takes leave of his people, while they celebrate the accession of Idamante and Ilia with songs and dances.

"Idomeneo," in spite of its greatness, has seldom been performed in recent years. Mozart hoped that, like Gluck's "Iphigénie," it might be translated into German, and performed at Vienna in the autumn of 1781, in which case he intended to rewrite the part of Idomeneo for a bass, and "rearrange the whole opera more in the French style." As he mentions Adamberger among the singers whom he had in view, it is probable that he would also have rearranged the part of Idamante for a tenor. The opera, however, was not accepted, and Mozart had to wait until 1786 for a performance by amateurs. For this occasion Mozart made various alterations. Idamante was sung by a tenor, and a new duet with Ilia was substituted for the one which occurs at the beginning of the third act. The necessary alterations were made in the ensembles, and an entirely new aria with a violin

[1] This beautiful aria had to be cut out at the first performance, owing to the great length of the third act.

obbligato was added to the part. The part of Idomeneo was considerably shortened and simplified, sometimes with great advantage, as in the case of the great aria in Act II, which has gained much by the compression. Most of the alterations, in fact, were made in order to shorten the opera, and several airs were cut out altogether. The lady who sang Electra was apparently an indifferent singer, as that part was very considerably reduced. Arbace was suppressed altogether, and for his scene with Idomeneo at the beginning of Act II, Mozart substituted a scene for Idamante and Ilia, introducing the new aria for Idamante.

In arranging the opera for modern performance, it will probably be advisable to make a compromise between the two versions. Some of the cuts may be adopted with advantage, and, needless to say, the part of Idamante will be better given to a tenor, and not to a soprano, although the contrast between father and son suffers considerably by the similarity of the two voices. But the new recitative and rondo with violin, "Non temer, amato bene," are hardly improvements to the opera. The rondo shows Mozart in a more advanced style; but it is a style that accords very ill with the original version of the tragedy. We feel at once that Mozart had lost touch with his original ideas, and has given his friend the singer an effective concert aria instead of giving us a new light on the character of Idamante. It is further obvious that although the drama gains by the suppression of Arbace, the curtailment of Electra's part is disastrous, since her arias are among the finest in the whole opera.

The chief difficulty of the modern producer will

be in inducing the audience to accept the Italian eighteenth-century conventions, especially since Varesco's clumsy libretto tends to place them in a painfully strong light, in spite of all Mozart's genius for dramatic effect. But it has recently been found possible to stage operas of Gluck in such a way as to hold the attention of modern listeners, and the style of "Idomeneo" is not so utterly different from that of "Alceste" and "Armide" as to make it impossible for us to appreciate. The usual mistake of modern stage-managers in reviving operas of Mozart is to assume that the works are so hopelessly old-fashioned that their weakness must be bolstered up by the insertion of a quantity of quite unnecessary modern business, serious or comic as the case may be.[1] A Mozart opera demands above all things finished and careful singing; there is no need to declaim and distort vocal phrases for the sake of obtaining "expression," since Mozart has put more real expression into his melodies than any singer will ever be able to produce by spoiling them. The next thing is that the producer must have a definite idea of the opera as a whole, so that every detail may be thought out in accordance with one guiding principle, and the complete work given its consistent and appropriate atmosphere. Once this has been secured, it only remains to act and sing the opera with the utmost simplicity and directness, and we may be sure that Mozart will always succeed in converting even a modern audience to his own point of view.

[1] I speak of those who do at least attempt to give a careful interpretation of Mozart; we may disregard those cosmopolitan performances which are little better than concerts in costume.

CHAPTER V

"DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL"

During the eighteen months that elapsed between "Idomeneo" and Mozart's next opera three important events took place in the composer's life—his rupture with the Archbishop of Salzburg, his separation from his father, and his betrothal to Constanze Weber. His marriage indeed took place within a month of the production of the new opera. The real turning-point in his career was, however, "Idomeneo"; it was "Idomeneo" and the success which it encountered that made Mozart realize fully that he was a composer with a future before him and a right to his own independence. Hitherto he had endured the tyranny of his father and the insults of the archbishop as best he could; after "Idomeneo" he could endure neither any longer.

The archbishop summoned him from Munich in March 1781 to attend upon him in Vienna with the rest of his suite. Mozart was in no mood to return to the humble position of former days. At meals he sat with Ceccarelli the *castrato* and Brunetti the violinist, above the archbishop's cooks, but below the archbishop's valets: "Well! I could almost think I was in Salzburg." Ceccarelli's society was just endurable, but Brunetti was uneducated and mannerless; Mozart was ashamed to be seen about with them. He was soon able to make friends

among the music-loving nobility of Vienna; but the archbishop put every possible hindrance in his way, and would not even allow him to play at a concert for the benefit of musicians' widows. He was obliged to give in, however, since Starzer, the organizer of the concert, appealed to Prince Galitzin, who with other members of the aristocracy put pressure upon the archbishop to change his mind. Mozart played for the widows, and naturally made a huge success; but his reverend master absolutely refused to let him give a concert on his own account. He sent in his resignation, but it was not accepted, for the archbishop expected that Leopold Mozart would prevail upon his son to withdraw it. Wolfgang had no intention of withdrawing it, and after much trouble in attempting to obtain an audience of the archbishop, in order to take leave of him, was finally kicked out of his ante-chamber by Count Arco, the chamberlain.[1]

Old Leopold was very much shocked, not so much at the treatment which his son had received, as at his son's resentment of it. He was quite content to be a servant of the archbishop himself, and could not understand why Wolfgang should be so rebellious. He was inwardly convinced that what really governed his son's actions was a love of pleasure and distraction, and that once set free from strict parental control he would merely lead a life of self-indulgence and extravagance. Wolfgang, being at last independent, had to find new lodgings, and went to live with his old Mannheim friends the Webers. The father was dead, and Aloysia being engaged at the opera and married to the actor Lange,

[1] The English translator of Jahn discreetly says that Count Arco "pushed him towards the door with his foot."

the widow and the other three daughters had come to live at Vienna. The voice of scandal soon made itself heard, and even reached as far as Salzburg; Leopold, always ready to believe anything to the discredit of his own son, returned to his letters of reproach. Wolfgang had in the meantime already thought it advisable to look for lodgings elsewhere. He protested that he had no intention of marrying any of the daughters, whatever people might say, and begged his father not to listen to malicious gossip. This was in July. But by December he had changed his mind, and was definitely engaged to the second of the unmarried daughters, Constanze. Leopold had always viewed the Webers with suspicion, even in their Mannheim days, and was convinced that they were bent on entrapping Wolfgang into marriage. Wolfgang was naturally indignant at this, and furious at hearing that Peter von Winter had spoken of Constanze as "a designing woman."[1] Winter had never forgiven Mozart for scoffing at the pompous manners and clumsy playing of the Abbé Vogler,[2] of whom he was a devoted pupil. Reading Wolfgang's letters to his father, there is not the least reason to doubt that his attachment to the girl was absolutely sincere and genuine—we know too that he was devoted to her all his life—or that his life had been as chaste as he protests.[3]

[1] The word which he used was "Luder," and Nohl says that in South Germany it meant "a designing woman"; but its usual German meaning at the present day is very much stronger. And Winter had apparently told Leopold that she was Wolfgang's mistress.

[2] Browning's "Abt Vogler."

[3] The letter in question is so outspoken that even Jahn omits one passage and apologizes for the rest, while his English translator has cut out what is the main point of Mozart's protests. But there is nothing in the letter which is not entirely to the writer's credit.

But it is equally clear that his intimacy with Constanze led people to suppose that he had seduced her, otherwise her guardian would hardly have forced him to sign a document promising either to marry her or to pay her an annuity of 300 florins. No sooner was the guardian out of the house than Constanze took the document out of her mother's hands and tore it up.

Leopold for a long time withheld his consent. Old Madame Weber was intemperate in her habits, as Wolfgang had to admit, although he said that he never saw her absolutely drunk. Constanze's own behaviour sometimes shocked even Mozart himself, who considered that a girl who was engaged to be married ought to be more careful.[1] Constanze was indeed very far below the level of her husband. Even during their engagement he describes her in no very attractive terms, "She is not ugly, but certainly anything but beautiful—her entire beauty consists of two little black eyes and a good figure. She is not clever, but has sound common sense enough to be able to fulfil her duties as wife and mother." Her spelling was indeed deplorable, and she felt quite ashamed of herself when she had to write to her future father-in-law. She was said to be a good housekeeper, and she had need to be, considering the circumstances of her married life; her common sense may have fitted her for the duties of a wife and mother, but her health certainly did not. Madame Weber's tendency to drink seems to have increased rapidly in the course of the year 1782, and Constanze was treated very badly by her. The performance

[1] See Mozart's letter to her of April 29, 1782. This letter is also suppressed by the English translator of Jahn.

of Mozart's opera in July brought him and his affairs into considerable prominence, and the situation was not improved by his attempt to place Constanze under the protection of Baroness von Waldstätten, a lady of very kindly disposition but of more than doubtful reputation. Madame Weber threatened that if the Baroness did not give up her daughter, she would send the police for her. This was towards the end of July. Leopold, in spite of all Wolfgang's entreaties, still refused his consent, and refused even to take any interest in the success of "Die Entführung." Finally Wolfgang took matters into his own hands and married Constanze on August 4, his father's consent reaching him, as a matter of fact, a day afterwards. Leopold further informed him that since he himself could not expect to be helped by his son out of the awkward position in which he had placed himself on his son's account, Wolfgang was therefore not to count upon receiving any financial assistance from him either now or in the future.

Such were the domestic difficulties with which Mozart had to grapple during the composition of "Die Entführung aus dem Serail." Needless to say, it has often been maintained that the opera was inspired by Constanze Weber, the more especially as Constanze is also the name of the heroine; but it seems probable that if Mozart had not been so much distracted by the painful circumstances of his engagement, he might have produced a work that was better planned and more consistent in style.

The Emperor Joseph II had been seized with an enthusiasm for developing the national drama, and had begun in 1776 by doing away with the old plan of letting the imperial theatre to private managers

and by establishing it as a court and national institution. The movement had been a pronounced success; the company included various names that even now are famous in the history of the German stage, and with the co-operation of eminent authors, both as playwrights and critics, the Viennese public were really educated up to a high standard of appreciative interest in the drama. The next step was to nationalize the opera. The old Italian opera and ballet were abolished, and in February 1778 the "National-Singspiel," as it was called, began its career with a little one-act comic opera by Umlauf, "Die Bergknappen." In spite of the fact that very few of the singers were really adequate for the lyric drama, possibly indeed for that very reason, that they were almost all actors rather than singers, the "National-Singspiel" prospered, although its repertory consisted mainly of translations from French or Italian comic opera. Gradually, however, a company of genuine German opera-singers was formed, and if we can judge by the criticism of Adamberger, one of their number, on the North German school of singing, the Viennese company must have had peculiar merits which were not to be found elsewhere. There was a flourishing school of composers in North Germany who produced not only comic operas of a definitely national character, but were also the founders of a tradition of German song which reached its zenith in Schubert and Brahms. These composers, however, met with little sympathy in Vienna, and the singers who had been trained in their methods were found too "Lutheran" in their style for an audience which had historical and geographical reasons for being closely in touch with Italy.

The moment could hardly have been more favourable for Mozart. He had hoped to get "Idomeneo" performed in German, but this plan fell through; "Zaide," the unfinished score of which he had brought with him, was apparently condemned on account of its libretto. But it showed at any rate what he could do, and the inspector of the opera, a certain Gottlob Stephanie, always known as "Stephanie the younger," promised him a new libretto to set to music for the national theatre. Stephanie and his elder brother were at this time both well known on the Vienna stage. The elder was a sound actor and a writer of some merit; the younger, who had lived a more adventurous life, was a notoriously untrustworthy character. He began his career as a dramatist with a military piece, and, having been a soldier himself, acted his own military parts with some success. He became known also as the author of a rearrangement of "Macbeth" which for a long time kept the stage as a spectacular piece with supernatural effects; it was intended to replace Tirso de Molina's "Don Juan," which was then very popular. Stephanie was described as "the evil genius of the Vienna stage—envious, avaricious, restless, and quarrelsome;"[1] he was, in fact, one of those people who seize upon every chance that comes their way without scruples either as to common honesty or artistic morality.

As might be expected, the libretto of "Die Entführung"—or, as it was originally called, "Belmont und Constanze"—was not an original work, but was adapted with very slight alterations from a libretto by one Bretzner, which had been written

[1] *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie.*

only that same year for the composer André. Bretzner was very indignant at the alterations made by Stephanie and Mozart, and published a protest in 1782 against the bad verses which had been inserted in his work. Bretzner, however, had no very sound claim to originality, for it has been recently shown[1] that his play was closely imitated from an English comic opera, "The Captive," performed in London in 1769 with music made up from favourite songs by Galuppi, Ciampi, Vento, and other Italian composers, as well as six new songs by Dibdin. Another English play, "The Sultan, or A Peep into the Seraglio," by Isaac Bickerstaffe, contains scenes between a custodian of the harem called Osmin and an English lady called Roxelana, which seem to have been the models for the scenes between Mozart's Osmin and another English woman, here called Blonde or Blondchen. The English plays in their turn were probably derived from Italian sources.

The plot of the opera as finally set by Mozart is as follows. Act I: Constanze, a Spanish lady, has been captured by the Pasha Selim, who wishes to make her his wife. Her Spanish lover, Belmonte, has discovered her whereabouts through his former servant Pedrillo (who, having also been captured by the Turks, is at present head gardener to Selim), and has hastened to her rescue. The first person whom he encounters is Osmin, head of the Pasha's household at his country seat, who regards him with considerable suspicion, the more so as he is a friend of Pedrillo, who has aroused Osmin's jealousy

[1] Walter Preibisch, "Quellenstudien zu Mozart's 'Entführung au dem Serail'" (*Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, x. 430).

in the matter of Blonde, Constanze's English maid. No sooner has Belmonte left the stage than Pedrillo enters. Osmin, after a short dialogue and a song, retires; Belmonte then returns and arranges with Pedrillo to be presented to Selim as an architect. The Pasha now enters with Constanze, preceded by a chorus of Turks. He presses his love on Constanze, who rejects it. After she has gone, Pedrillo presents Belmonte to Selim, and the act ends with a terzetto in which Osmin vainly tries to prevent Belmonte and Pedrillo from entering the palace. Act II begins with a scene for Blonde and Osmin, in which the lady insists on being treated with the respect due to her nationality, Osmin replying with some commiserating remarks on the long-suffering good-nature of English men. A short dialogue between Blonde and Constanze follows; Selim enters and renews his request, accompanying it this time with the threat of torture. Constanze again refuses. Pedrillo reveals to Blonde that Belmonte has arrived and intends to rescue them; he next proceeds to make Osmin drunk, and, this accomplished, the ladies return to the stage to conclude the act with a quartet.

Act III begins with the elopement. Pedrillo serenades Constanze to the accompaniment of a mandoline, and Belmonte enters the palace by a ladder. The escaping lovers are, however, intercepted by Osmin and the slaves, and are sent to the Pasha for punishment. Selim, however, finding that Belmonte is the son of his worst enemy, determines to set an example of magnanimity and sends all four prisoners home, the opera ending with a quintet and chorus in praise of his generous action.

Bretzner's original libretto was of the ordinary "Singspiel" type, a play with songs. The "Beggar's Opera" had set the fashion for this type of entertainment in England, and it had taken firm root in North Germany. The "Beggar's Opera" was, of course, merely a parody of Italian serious opera, and therefore made no use of ensemble movements. The entire action of the play took place in the dialogue, and every single song could have been omitted without any damage to the drama. This system was carried on in the German Singspiel, and also in the French type of comic opera. Even when ensembles began to be employed under Italian influence, the main action of the play always took place in the dialogue. This went on as late as Cherubini's "Les deux journées" (1800). The weakness of this type of opera is that, although apparently depending on music for its emotional appeal, it goes without music at just those very moments where music is emotionally most wanted. As long as comic opera was really comic, as in the case of the "Beggar's Opera" and the early Neapolitan and Venetian comic operas, this did not matter much; but average audiences are quite unable as a rule to enjoy musical parody. People who are untrained in the reasonable appreciation of music like to take anything musical quite seriously, and the result of this has invariably been that what starts as genuine comic opera eventually degenerates into sentimental comedy with a few humorous episodes of a very simple kind.

If ever there was a composer capable of musical satire it was Mozart; but his natural tendency was to serious opera, and even when he deliberately set out to write musical comedy, he often allowed himself

CONSTANZE MOZART

née Weber

to be led into a development of musical emotions that was not always consonant with the original intention. Moreover, being a musician, he felt from the first, and felt it the more owing to his Italian training, that an opera must be as far as possible a continuous piece of music. He had no intention of following the example of popular composers like Hiller and André, who merely provided trivial ditties that had no particular connection with the drama. For him an opera was always a "music-drama." He might make concessions to particular singers, just as a modern playwright will arrange his work to suit particular actors; but the main point is that whatever the particular circumstances may be, music is the principal means of human expression. In many comic operas, old and new, we feel that the music is an intruder: in an opera of Mozart the intruder is the spoken dialogue. This is corroborated in fact by one of his own letters on the subject of this very opera. "In an opera the poetry must be the obedient daughter of the music. For why do the Italian comic operas succeed everywhere? with all the wretched nonsense of their libretti—even in Paris, as I saw myself? Because the music has the upper hand completely, and people forget everything on that account. And so an opera ought to succeed all the more when the plan of the piece has been well worked out, and the words written simply for the music, without putting in words or whole stanzas that destroy a composer's entire idea just for the sake of a miserable rhyme."

Another letter shows us how he set to work to get the original play modified to suit his ideas. "The opera began originally with a soliloquy [for Belmonte], and I asked Herr Stephanie to make a little arietta

out of it, and also that instead of the two chattering after Osmin's song, there should be a duet. . . . Osmin in the original libretto had that one song to sing and nothing else, except in the terzetto [end of Act I] and the finale. He has therefore been given an aria in the first act, and will have another in the second. I have given Herr Stephanie the aria complete—and most of the music was ready before he knew a word about it. I sent you only the beginning and the end, which ought to be very effective."

A very important and in some ways disastrous alteration was made later on. The letter just quoted (September 26, 1781) says towards the end, "I cannot do any more work at the second act, because the whole plot is being upset, and at my request too. At the beginning of the third act there is a charming quintet or rather finale, but I would rather have this at the end of the second act. In order to manage this there must be a great alteration, in fact the addition of a new intrigue, and Stephanie is head over ears in work." Stephanie probably had no intention of giving himself more trouble than was necessary—we can see that from the other arias which he provided, some of which are written so clumsily that Mozart himself had to alter the words—and whether from the distraction of his love-affairs or from mere inexperience, Mozart did not succeed in getting the rearrangement made in a satisfactory way. The original libretto ended the second act with a quartet expressing the hope that the flight of the lovers would be successful. This quartet was set by André in the usual noisy style of a finale. The third act began at once with a sextet in the course of which the whole elopement, including Pedrillo's serenade and Osmin's discovery of the fugi-

tives, was set to music. It was evidently this scene that Mozart with true dramatic insight wished to put at the end of Act II, as it would make an admirable "curtain" and could be worked up into a big finale such as we are familiar with in Mozart's later operas. If the Pasha had been able to sing, his final act of clemency might have been introduced, and the whole concluded with a chorus, more or less on the lines of the final scene of "Figaro," which corresponds fairly closely to the general scheme—a busy ensemble with plenty of action, including two set arias (Susanna's "Deh vieni" and Figaro's "Aprite un po' quegli occhi," corresponding to Belmonte's aria and Pedrillo's serenade), and leading up to a climax with the sudden unexpected appearance of the Countess corresponding to the appearance of Selim. This arrangement would, however, have reduced the opera to two acts, and Stephanie was either too lazy or too stupid to invent a continuation for the third, even if the forgiveness of the lovers by Selim had been postponed. The result on the opera is that we lose the whole of the elopement scene, as far as music is concerned, except for Pedrillo's serenade (Belmonte's initial aria is quite separate), since a musical composition of this kind could not possibly be put at the beginning of an act. Nor do we obtain a really effective finale to Act II. The new quartet which Mozart set to music is, I admit, the finest number of the opera, and, more than that, it is a very wonderful piece of music considered by itself and in relation to Mozart's compositions generally. But it is not in its right place at the end of an act. The two men and the two women meet together for the first time. They are at first overcome with joy; then the men become

suspicious lest the women should have been unfaithful to them. The women reply, with tears in the one case, and bad manners (Blonde is an Englishwoman) in the other; the men apologize, the women forgive, and all join together to sing the praise of love. Developed as the composition may appear, it yet belongs not to the class of finales, but to that of ensembles, such as were described in the preceding chapter. The dramatic action does not progress; it stops deliberately. We cannot regard the scene of jealousy as dramatic action; if it was to be taken seriously, it should have been developed further, and the act might indeed have ended fairly effectively by leaving the ladies' innocence still doubtful, so as to make the men think twice as to whether it was worth while rescuing them after all. Considered definitely as an ensemble, it might quite well have found a place in the elopement scene, provided it were set to music with that idea in view, and it is only our unsophisticated opera-goers who would say, "If they hadn't dawdled over that silly quartet they might have got off before Osmin came back and caught them!"

What Mozart did (and he probably had to make the best of a bad job) was to take this obvious ensemble and set it to music as if it were a finale. Considering all things it is a very effective piece of work in this style; the only misfortune is that the earlier part of the movement, the scene of jealousy, and notably the intensely serious fifteen bars of *Andante* (in six-eight time) in the middle, show only too plainly what the original conception was. The main fault, of course, lies always with Stephanie, who probably took the view that a bustling finale in

music was enough for a "curtain," even if there was no real dramatic situation at the back of it.

Another very serious defect of the opera is that the Pasha Selim does not sing at all. This perhaps was not a very serious matter in the original libretto, especially if set to music in the usual "Singspiel" style; but when the music is the principal means of dramatic expression, a character who speaks but does not sing may just as well be dumb altogether. There is one celebrated opera in which the heroine is altogether dumb, Auber's "La muette de Portici" ("Masaniello"). In this the part is acted in pantomime by a *première danseuse*, and her strictly conventional gestures are illustrated by music; but even then the result is curious rather than moving. It has been suggested[1] that in Constanze's great aria, "Martern aller Arten," the feelings of Selim are expressed by the orchestra. This is hardly tenable. The peculiarity of the aria is that it is accompanied by four solo instruments in addition to the orchestra. These solo instruments are, of course, treated in the manner of a concerto, and the aria is consequently preceded by an enormously long introduction, in which they have the usual alternating and contrasting passages with the orchestra. Now, since the fundamental principle of a concerto is the opposition of unequal masses—the individual and the crowd, for instance—we might at first sight suppose that the solo players represented Constanze and the orchestra Selim. Stage-managers display much ingenuity in arranging a pantomimic interpretation of the introduction in this sense, but the result is always rather obviously a *tour de force*.

[1] H. Bulthaupt, *Dramaturgie der Oper*.

The opera was first performed on July 16, 1782, and won immediate popularity. Here, one would have thought, was the real opportunity for establishing German opera on a permanent basis. Yet it was not a year before the German opera came to an end altogether. The next libretto that Mozart was offered was so bad that he refused to set it—wisely, for as set to music by Umlauf it was a complete failure; Stephanie engaged in every kind of intrigue to get the management of the theatre into his own hands, and when he had secured his object, found that he made so many enemies as to render his position hopeless; and the Emperor at the bottom of his heart preferred Italian opera and the music of Salieri. "Die Entführung" was revived only for the special benefit of Aloysia Lange.

A certain school of critics tend to set an exaggerated value on "Die Entführung" because it is "a German opera." Let us consider for a moment what really constitutes "German music," and how far Mozart's operas with German words differ in style from those which he composed to Italian words.

Where are we to look for the signs of nationality in music? In its affinity to folk-song? If so, what becomes of the composers who never made use of folk-song, or only employed it in very rare cases? Are the Rasoumoffsky quartets to make Beethoven a Russian composer? If folk-song is to be the test, then J. S. Bach is the only classical composer of the first rank who can claim to be German. The enthusiasm for folk-song which has recently become prevalent in England has caused us to view the question in a curiously confused way. The folk-songs

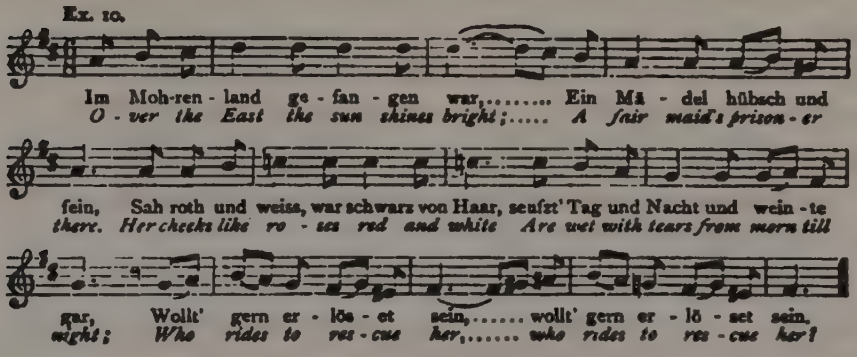
which we now rejoice to find in the works of contemporary composers are genuine enough as products of the race and soil, but they are for practical purposes as foreign to the composers who use them as if they were French or Italian. The composers have not been brought up on them from infancy; as grown men they have found them, either in printed collections, or on the lips of old country singers whom they have hunted out with a true collector's patience. From about 1750 to 1900, English folk-song was buried underground, and during that period there was nothing produced which we can accept now as worthy of the name. During the first half of this period, however, Germany was exceedingly active in this field, and the result is that for the average German a *Volkslied* generally means a tune of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.[1] The musician who turned these most effectively to account was, of course, Weber. If the Huntsmen's Chorus in "Der Freischütz" represents the essence of German music, let us be thankful that Mozart was no German in this sense! But the Huntsmen's Chorus, whatever a Sunday night audience in a German opera-house may think, is fortunately not the whole of Weber's achievements.

It was, however, just this kind of stuff that Mozart's patriotic audiences wanted, and Dittersdorf, Hiller, André, Umlauf and the rest supplied it as copiously as writers of "musical comedy" supply the wants of modern England. If the one is real German music, so is the other real English music. To see Mozart's

[1] This does not apply to folk-songs which were set to sacred words at the time of the Reformation, and which we now place in a class apart as "chorales."

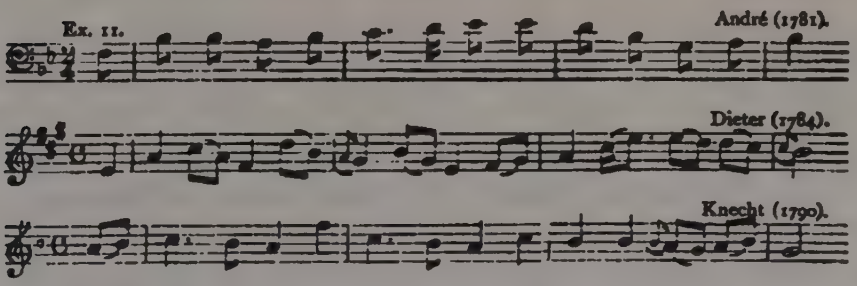
point of view, compare his setting of Pedrillo's serenade in Act III of "Die Entführung"—the obvious opportunity in the opera for a song of the "folk-song" type—

Ex. 10.


Im Moh-ren - land ge - fan - gen war,..... Ein Mä - del hübsch und
O - ver the East the sun shines bright;..... A fair maid's priso - er
fein, Sah roth und weiss, war schwarz von Haar, seufzt' Tag und Nacht und wein - te
there. Her cheeks like ro - ses red and white Are wet with tears from morn till
gar, Wollt' gern er - lö - et sein,..... wollt' gern er - lö - set sein.
night; Who rides to res - cue her,..... who rides to res - cue her?

with the settings of three contemporary composers who also wrote music to the same libretto.

Ex. 11.



Yet Germany—at any rate North Germany—had at this period a school of song that was certainly serious, and might well claim to be national. It had descended in the direct line from J. S. Bach himself, through his sons Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philip Emmanuel. For it was in North Germany that a school of lyric poets was arising whose verses inspired men like Reichardt and Zumsteeg to the composition of

songs which might almost have come from the pen of Schubert himself. But to Mozart they must, at this date at least, have been practically unknown. The few chamber songs that he produced,[1] beautiful as they are, represent an even less important side of his activity than the pianoforte sonatas. Their models are not the German songs of the northern composers, but the comic-opera songs of Monsigny, Gluck, and the Italians.[2] Only once did he set a classical German lyric to music—Goethe's "Das Veilchen."

We might with more reason trace the sense of nationality in the relation which a composer's melodies bear to the natural rhythm of his language. It is at any rate an affinity which we English are certainly quick to recognize, which makes Purcell and Parry essentially and typically English for us, however strong the influence of Lully and Stradella, Brahms and Wagner may be upon certain aspects of their technique. It is not for an English writer to attempt a detailed criticism of Mozart's susceptibility to German and Italian speech-rhythms. But two main points of difference will be apparent to anyone who has some acquaintance with the two languages. First, German verse, especially in Mozart's day, tends to employ simple stanzas with alternate one-syllable and two-syllable rhymes,[3] whereas Italian verse, even in the comparatively rare cases where it employs an alternation of this kind, aims at a more complicated scheme. Compare the following

[1] The best of them date from 1787 onwards.

[2] Max Friedlaender, *Mozart's Lieder* (Edition Peters).

[3] Goethe employs them frequently in the second part of "Faust" to express Teutonic as opposed to Hellenic ideas, *e.g.* in the case of Lynceus der Thürmer,

two stanzas, which have been selected to show the essential difference, even though there is an apparent similarity:[1]—

Es rauschet das Wasser
Und bleibet nicht stehn;
Gar lustig die Sterne
Am Himmel hin gehn;
Gar lustig die Wolken
Am Himmel hin ziehn;
So rauschet die Liebe
Und fähret dahin.

(GOETHE, *Jery und Bätely.*)

Se d'un amor tiranno
Credei di trionfar,
Lasciami nell' inganno,
Lasciami lusingar
Che più non amo.
Se l'odio è il mio dover,
Barbara, e tu lo sai,
Perchè avveder mi fai,
Che in van lo bramo?

(METASTASIO, *Artaserse.*)

Goethe's words, if set to music, must be a simple *lied;* Metastasio's, though they might be set simply, are more appropriate to a developed "aria."

Secondly, it may be said roughly that whereas Italian poetry prefers simple ideas expressed in complicated language, German prefers the ideas to be complicated and the language simple. Or we may put it in this way—that all Italian poets, good or bad, from Ariosto to Carducci, have always written with a peculiar sense of pride in the beauty of the language itself. Even we English have Latin blood enough to appreciate this to some extent; whereas it is a quality so foreign to German poetry that we shall only find it noticeable in such exceptionally complete masters of the literary art as Goethe, Heine, and Nietzsche. To judge of this difference as it appears in poetasters of the lowest rather than the highest rank, we need only compare Varesco's "Idomeneo" with Bretzner and Stephanie's "Entführung."

We may therefore safely expect to find that Mozart

[1] When Metastasio's metrical scheme is used by Goethe in his musical plays, it is, of course, a deliberate imitation of Italian models.

in setting German to music will alter and, generally speaking, simplify his melodic phrases, and will moreover find it necessary to concentrate his emotional expression instead of spreading it. One result of this will be that pure vocal and melodic expression will often have to give way to a form of expression that is harmonic and instrumental. This difference has, of course, been acknowledged for centuries as the characteristic difference between German and Italian music, and has no doubt arisen not from the difference of language, but from that racial difference of temperament of which the difference of language is itself another manifestation. We must remember, however, that though a difference of this kind may be obvious when we contrast types of what we may call the musical "lower classes" of both nations, it will be quite a complicated matter to trace it in the work of so cosmopolitan and so accomplished a musician as Mozart.

Now, given the conditions of melodic and harmonic technique at the period under discussion, it is clear from the foregoing that whereas Italian modes of vocal expression were best suited for the stage, German vocal methods were better adapted to the chamber.[1] And here we come at once to one of Mozart's great achievements in the history of music—the development of an essentially German dramatic style out of the old German chamber style. Mozart was not the first to attempt German opera on the grand scale, nor is it necessary to go back to the old days of Keiser's

[1] The Italians had had a glorious period of vocal chamber music at the beginning of the century, but it had now died out. See my two articles on "Italian Chamber Cantatas" in *The Musical Antiquary*, April and July 1911.

Hamburg operas to find a predecessor for him. Mention has already been made of Ignaz Holzbauer's "Günther von Schwarzburg," produced at Mannheim, and heard by Mozart in 1777. Holzbauer was a very capable writer of symphonies, but he had not genius enough to create an original German operatic style any more than his librettist, whose work reads like a clumsy parody of Metastasio. The subject was taken from German history, and the book is plentifully garnished with patriotic sentiments; but when the hero finally dies with an appeal to the survivors to be German and cast off foreign manners, the ludicrously Italian antics of both words and music make this pathetic scene almost ironical. The strength of Holzbauer's music lay in his handling of the orchestra, and in the conscientiousness with which he planned every detail. How much Mozart learnt from him we can see in "Idomeneo"; but Mozart even in 1777 knew a good deal more than Holzbauer about Italian opera; and, little though he may have thought so himself, it was Italian opera to German words that Holzbauer had tried to write.

It is interesting in this connection to look at Mozart's unfinished and now forgotten opera "Zaide." He had hoped to get it performed in Vienna in 1781; but Schachtner's libretto was ludicrously bad, and Stephanie probably thought it more to his own interest to find Mozart a new book. After all, "Zaide" was a Turkish story in many respects similar to "Die Entführung," and Stephanie may well have thought that Mozart could use up his old music afresh. "Zaide," however, in spite of its similarities, shows a noticeable difference of style from "Die Entführung." It is very evidently the work of a young

composer who writes to please himself, putting down his ideas and experimenting with them, and trusting to chance to get them presented on the stage. Mozart was at the time very much interested in the idea of "German opera," and had also just come across Georg Benda's curious experiments in "melodrama," *i.e.* orchestral music accompanying a recitative that was not sung but spoken—a device which has been utilized in German dramatic music with very interesting results from Benda's time down to the present day.[1]

The fragments of "Zaide" which have survived are a strange jumble of different styles. It was hardly possible for a young composer to evolve a perfectly German type of opera when his worthy librettist could not get beyond a deliberate imitation of Italian models. It was perhaps Mozart's good fortune that both Schachtner (the poet of "Zaide") and Stephanie were such incompetent versifiers that they were unable to keep up even an outward semblance of Italianism for any considerable length of time.

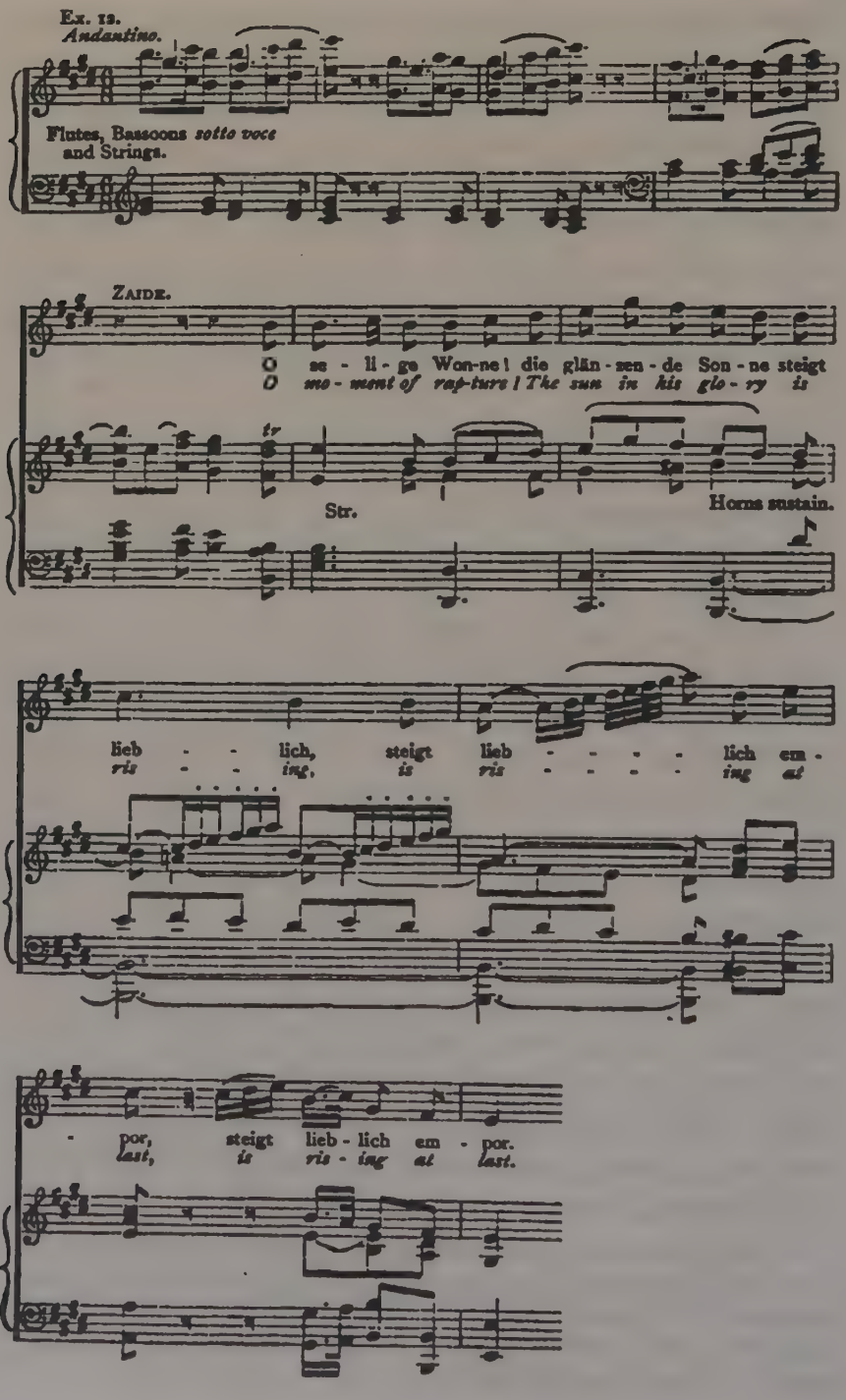
Mozart's "melodrama" is not successful, and he never repeated the experiment. There are a few passages of deep pathos, but on the whole he seems to have forgotten that in an accompanied recitative the voice still dominates the orchestra because it is actually singing, whereas in melodrama a composer must endeavour in some way to make up for the loss of musical thought and the breaks of continuity that ensue when the actor merely speaks. Orchestral passages that will do well enough as accompaniments to song become painfully bald and conventional

[1] Humperdinck's "Königskinder" (in the original version of 1897) was a singularly beautiful example of what may be done in this direction.

when they have to stand by themselves; and the poet must also remember that it is his duty to mask the break of continuity by a certain rhythmical correspondence in his speeches. Schachtner was naturally quite unequal to this, and the result of his inexperience added to Mozart's is often ridiculous in the extreme. Of the arias, some merely carry on the Italian tradition, with this difference only, that the voice part tends to lose in interest and effectiveness, the greater part of the work of expression being done by the orchestra. There is also a simple song at the beginning which is completely German, in the naïve and obvious manner of the popular Singspiel-writers. The hero himself alludes to it a moment later as "Unsinn."

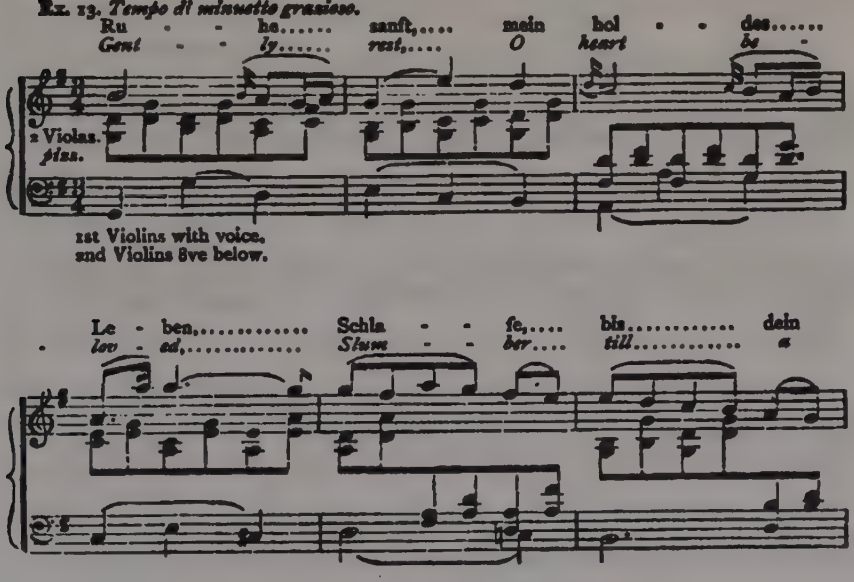
But there are a certain number of airs in which a new style is clearly perceptible. Schachtner has sometimes provided Mozart with words and sentiments that are simple and direct without being trivial or prosaic, and in these cases Mozart has set them in a spirit which approaches very nearly to that of the northern song-composers. The result, however, of this is that the general effect is not "operatic"; the songs of the Bachs were essentially music for the intimacy of the chamber, and this intimacy could take dramatic form only in what one might call "chamber-opera."[1] Yet a few extracts from "Zaide" are worth quoting here, to show how the germs of an essentially national style were beginning to develop in Mozart's mind.

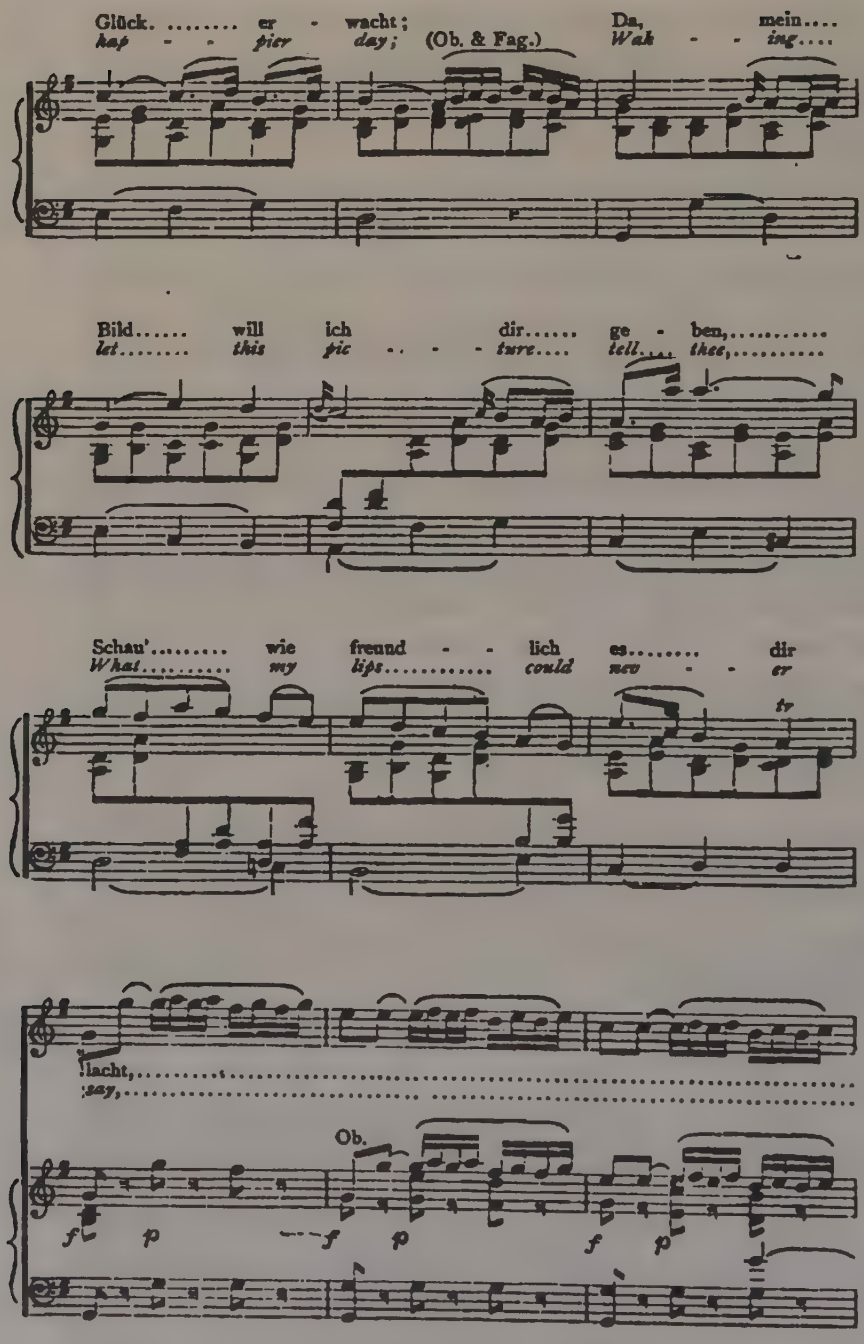
[1] "Chamber-opera" is not a form that is likely to find much favour now; but it has existed, just as the symphony in Haydn's early days belonged to the category of chamber music. "Dido und Aeneas," Peri's "Euridice," and in more modern times the "German Reed Entertainments" may be cited as examples.

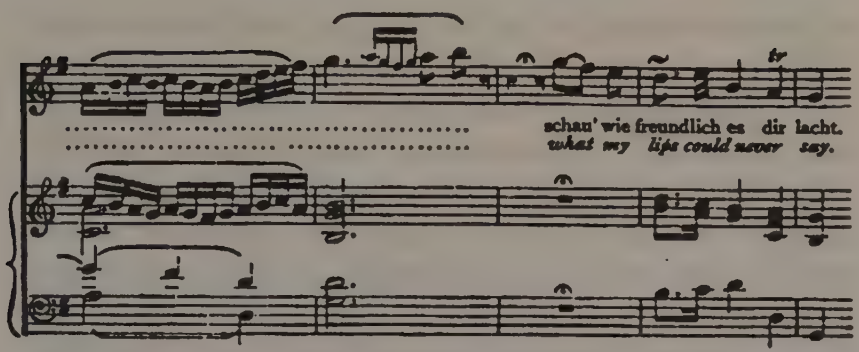

Ex. 12.
Andantino.
Flutes, Bassoons sotto voce and Strings.
ZAIDE.
O se - li - ge Won-ne! die glän - zen - de Son - ne steigt
O mo - ment of rap-ture! The sun in his glo - ry is
Str.
Horns sustain.
lieb - lich, steigt lieb - - - - lich em -
ris - ing, is ris - - - - ing at
por, steigt lieb - lich em - por.
last, is ris - ing at last.

This first example at once recalls the chorus "Placido è il mar" in "Idomeneo," and there are moments in it which seem to foreshadow the little terzetto "Soave sia il vento" in "Così fan tutte." The resemblance is, of course, heightened by the fact that all three pieces are in E major. Yet for all the Italian qualities of melody in each, no Italian could have written this example; no Italian would ever have wanted to obtain that peculiarly delicate intimacy of expression which is its distinguishing characteristic. This direct simplicity, combined with the most finished detail in the arrangement of the harmonies, is to be seen also in the aria "Herr und Freund," which is too long for quotation here. A short extract from an aria sung by Zaide will show even more completely the direction in which Mozart's new German style was tending.

Ex. 13. *Tempo di minuetto grazioso.*


Ru - he..... sanft,.... mein hol - des.....
Gent - ly..... rest,.... O heart be -
2 Violas. pizz.
1st Violins with voice.
2nd Violins 8ve below.
Le - ben,..... Schla - fe,.... bis..... dein
lov - ed,..... Slum - ber.... till..... a


Glück..... er - wacht;
hap - - pier day;
(Ob. & Fag.)
Da, mein....
Wak - - ing....
Bild..... will ich dir..... ge - ben,.....
let..... this pic - - - ture.... tell.... thee,.....
Schau'..... wie freund - - lich es..... dir
What..... my lips..... could nev - - er
tr
lacht,.....
say,.....
Ob.
f p f p f p



The simple scheme of the German stanza (8, 7, 8, 7) is reproduced exactly in the music. The outline of the melody and the firm yet easy movement of the bass are remarkably suggestive of some of J. S. Bach's songs, *e.g.* "So oft ich meine Tabakspfeife" and "Bist du bei mir," while the logical progression of the harmonies has necessitated a careful and almost contrapuntal treatment of the accompaniment figure. Note too the use of *coloratura* at the end, which is also in Bach's manner, though of course derived originally from Italian models.[1]

A musical language of this kind was not suited to large theatres and untrained audiences. Moreover, it seems to have been a regular principle with Mozart throughout his life to give his individual singers every possible consideration, and finding a very exceptional cast at his disposal for "Die Entführung," he carried out this principle to an extent that was not altogether advantageous to the opera as a permanent work of art, however advantageous it may have been to its first production. Madame Cavalieri (Constanze)—a Viennese in spite of her Italianized name—was a pupil of Salieri with

[1] Compare also the aria "Vaga rosa," sung by Cunegonda in the third act of Alessandro Scarlatti's "La Principessa Fedele."

a powerful voice, a wide compass and an amazing mastery of *coloratura;* Therese Teyber (Blonde) was a high soprano with all the charm of freshness and youth. Belmonte was Adamberger, a thorough artist both as singer and actor; and the part of Osmin was written for Fischer, a first-rate actor, with a bass voice of remarkable quality and range. Osmin is, of course, the great creation of the opera. He is the one personage who shows that wonderful power of individual characterization which (in his later operas at least) is Mozart's special gift. Every note that he sings belongs to him and to him only. But this cannot be said of the other characters. Belmonte has been considered typical of the new German romantic lover; but even if this is the case, he is, like Blonde, a type and not an individual. Constanze is the great mistake of the opera. She is not even a type, but merely a *prima donna.* Not that her songs are mere empty exhibitions of virtuosity; but they are entirely unsuited to the general scheme of the opera, even if we accept the rather over-elaborated songs of the other characters as proper to the scheme. The great "Martern aller Arten" is not a dramatic aria; it is a concerto, with four subordinate solo parts. Considered in this light it is a beautiful piece of construction, the voice and its four attendant satellites being grouped and combined with the ingenuity of one of the Brandenburg Concertos;[1] but in an opera, even were it a serious opera, it is utterly out of place. The only moments at which Constanze becomes a

[1] In the Peters Edition the aria has been cut down to about half its original length, thus spoiling the carefully-designed structure of the composition.

real character are in the quartet, and in the recitative which precedes her duet with Belmonte in Act III. This is another of those interesting places where Mozart, consciously or unconsciously, has expressed himself in the language of J. S. Bach—a language all the more appropriate, since the words

> Was ist der Tod? Ein Uebergang zur Ruh,
> Und dann an deiner Seite, ist er Vorgeschmack der Seligkeit,
> (What then is death? The door that leads to peace;
> With thee to stand beside me, 'tis a foretaste of blessedness)

curiously suggest the literary style of the church-cantatas. And one may well ask, what have Bach's church-cantatas to do with Viennese light opera? Here, in fact, is the fundamental error of the whole work: it is a medley of all sorts of styles with no definite artistic principle to make it coherent and consistent. It was "Die Entführung," more than any other opera, that influenced Weber, and we see almost exactly the same conditions reproduced in "Oberon." For Herr Stephanie and Mr. Planché opera meant polite entertainment in front of the curtain and professional business behind.[1] For Weber, as for Mozart, it meant at the particular moment struggling with an utterly unfamiliar set of conditions and being reduced almost in despair to making the individualities of particular singers into a guiding principle in default of any other. It was, indeed, only the inborn genius of a Mozart and a Weber that gave these two operas a power of fascination and an undying charm that have survived even the stalest and most disfiguring conventions of their respective periods. Neither opera

[1] Planché's *Recollections and Reflections* are curiously interesting as an unconscious exposition of his views on music and drama, especially in his amusingly pompous correspondence with Mendelssohn about a libretto.

is much more than a concert of charming music against a background of theatrical scenery, enlivened with occasional comic scenes of a rather puerile nature. Weber has this advantage over Mozart, that he was able to make his chorus of fairies seem a little more real than Mozart's Turks. But "local colour" was not a well-known device in Mozart's day. Alessandro Scarlatti had experimented with it in a chorus of Carthaginians in the opera "Marco Attitio Regolo" (1719), but it did not suit the general style of old-fashioned Italian opera, whether Metastasio laid his scene in China or the Canary Islands. Mozart's Turks are, of course, modelled on those in Gluck's comic opera "La rencontre imprévue,"[1] and a sufficiently "oriental" effect is obtained by a liberal use of bass drum, cymbals and triangle, even sometimes in the accompaniments to Osmin's part, which produces a delightfully humorous effect.

This want of musical coherence (and indeed of literary coherence too) was due simply to the primitive condition of German opera. Holzbauer's tragic opera was consistent, but consistent in the wrong direction; Umlauf's "Die Bergknappen" was as much of a jumble as "Die Entführung," without the genius of Mozart to carry it off. Not even Mozart was destined to achieve perfection in German opera; "Die Zauberflöte" did indeed establish the foundations of musical style for it, but "Die Zauberflöte," considered as a complete work, stands apart from German operatic history as definitely as does "Der Ring des Nibelungen."

[1] Also known as "Les pélerins de la Mecque." Mozart wrote variations for pianoforte on one of the airs, "Les hommes pieusement pour Catons nous tiennent."

"Die Entführung" survives, but it survives on account of merits which are not its own, whereas "Idomeneo," which is incomparably greater as a work of art, does not survive but is periodically resuscitated. But "Idomeneo" demands intelligence and concentrated attention on the part of an audience, whereas we can all enjoy "Die Entführung," not because it is a work of real dramatic art, but because it is full of delightful music, which is sufficiently similar in style to "Figaro" and "Don Giovanni" to make the average listener think that it must be an equally good opera. Nobody could think Mozart a great man just for having written "Die Entführung," but most people are content to accept "Die Entführung" as a great opera because it was written by Mozart.

CHAPTER VI

"LE NOZZE DI FIGARO"—I

MUSICIANS are not generally accustomed to group Mozart's compositions into well-defined periods as they do Beethoven's. MM. de Wyzewa and de Saint-Foix have indeed divided his life into no less than thirty-four periods, each of which lasted on an average rather less than a year. It is not necessary in a book which is concerned only with Mozart's dramatic works to dissect his career so minutely as that, but it may be useful to see if it cannot be divided roughly into some such periods as will correspond to and therefore be illustrated by the well-known "three styles" of Beethoven. It is, of course, generally possible to divide any man's life into three periods. Dante's three animals symbolize them as the ages of lust, ambition and avarice; an old jest said that a man entered his profession to get on, remained in it to get honour, and left it to get honest. The musician's three ages may be described in various ways. We may say that in the first he is asserting himself and trying to obtain an audience; in the second he has obtained his audience and is trying to develop himself to the fullest extent compatible with remaining in touch with it; in the third he has become indifferent to his audience, and writes only for himself.

Mozart's short life came to an end at an age when many musicians are only just beginning their

"second period"; yet it is quite possible to distinguish even a "third period" in his case, if only for the painful reason that the last year of his life was so clouded by illness and misfortune as to be almost equivalent to a premature old age. As to his "second period" we need have little hesitation in dating it from the year of "Die Entführung," the more so since that work coincided with his marriage. Between "Die Entführung" and "Le nozze di Figaro" four years elapsed, and to these four years belong a large number of Mozart's best-known compositions. The three famous symphonies, it is true, belong to a later date (1788), and the "Hafner" (1782) and "Prague" (1785) symphonies are the only great works in this form which fall within the "second period." But the advance in style is seen still more plainly in the set of six quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn, and written in open admiration of the older master's music. Another new influence which Mozart began to feel about this time was due to the friendship of Baron van Swieten,[1] who encouraged him to study the works of J. S. Bach and Handel. We must not suppose that Mozart's acquaintance with either of these composers was as extensive as is nowadays expected from a well-read musician; it probably did not go much beyond their works for the clavier, with the possible addition of a few of Handel's oratorios. But it led Mozart to arrange some of the fugues in the "Forty-eight" for strings, and to write preludes of his own to them; it led him to write a suite *all' antica* for the pianoforte, and to indulge to an

[1] Van Swieten was the son of Maria Theresa's celebrated physician. He had been ambassador at the court of Berlin, and it was there that he acquired his enthusiasm for Handel and the Bachs.

almost orgiastic degree that passion for fugues which never left him throughout his life after his first inoculation by Martini.

It requires some effort of the musical imagination to put ourselves back into the mind of Mozart when he first began to saturate himself with the works of Handel and the two Bachs. He was in some ways nearer to them, and in some ways more of a stranger to these old composers than we are now. We, in England at any rate, have absorbed Handel as we have absorbed the Bible, and the present generation is now beginning to regard J. S. Bach much as our forefathers regarded Handel. But to Mozart, although he had been an intimate friend of one of Bach's sons, and the other two, Friedemann and Emmanuel, were both still living in 1782, the musical atmosphere of Berlin must have been as strange as the musical atmosphere of Moscow might be to a young Italian composer. It is hardly too much to suggest that the strongest bond of union between the northern composers and Mozart would be not their common German blood, but their common Italian education. It was only because Mozart had been so thoroughly trained in fugue and its power of poetry by Martini that he was able to enter into the spirit of Bach and Handel and see how that power of poetry could be still further developed by the employment of a more ruthless application of the laws of musical reasoning. We may best judge the effect of this new influence upon him by studying the fugue in C minor for two pianofortes, composed in December 1783. Considered harmonically, its hideous cacophony is almost worthy of Richard Strauss; but besides its clear and logical construction, there is an

essentially vocal character about its themes which brings strength and beauty out of ugliness, as Luca Signorelli can bring strength and beauty out of all the agony and torture of those devils and damned souls that writhe and struggle on the walls of the cathedral of Orvieto.

During his early period Mozart was gradually building up his powers; during his second period he knows himself to be a giant and rejoices in his strength. It is therefore naturally a period of great concertos, in which he could present himself to his public at once as composer and virtuoso. No less than fourteen pianoforte concertos were written in the interval between "Die Entführung" and "Figaro," several of which are often heard at the present day. Some of the easier ones were written for Fräulein Barbara Ployer,[1] a pupil of whom he was so proud that he made a special point of bringing Paisiello to hear her; the majority, however, were intended for himself, and even the earlier of these works were sufficiently complicated for him to say of them in a letter to his father that they were "concertos to make one sweat!"[2]

Another side of his life still remains to be mentioned, though its full discussion must be postponed until later. At the time of his engagement to Constanze Weber he had been a sincere Catholic, regarding confession and the Mass with genuine devotion. The best proof of this is the great Mass in C minor, which was begun as a thankoffering for his

[1] He wrote for her the little concerto in E flat (K.V. 449), the better-known concerto in G (K.V. 453), and the sonata in D for two pianofortes, which he played with her himself at a concert given by her father.

[2] He refers to those in B flat and D (K.V. 450 and 451).

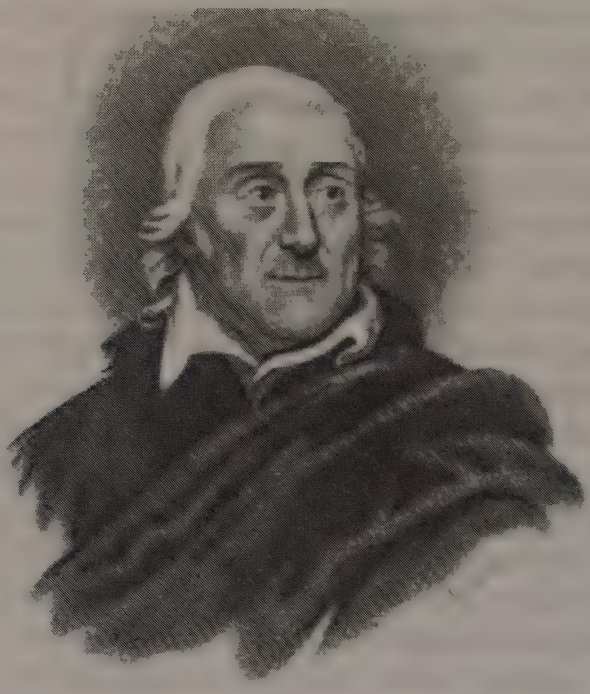
marriage. But he did not finish the work; the fragments were utilized a few years later for the Italian oratorio "Davidde penitente." Vienna brought him into a wider social circle, and it was possibly through Baron van Swieten, possibly through those relatives of Dr. Mesmer who still remained in Vienna that he made the acquaintance of Ignaz von Born and other distinguished men of science. His intimate friend Gottfried von Jacquin was the son of a celebrated botanist, and he also frequented the house of the Greiner family, which was a centre for all that was most noteworthy in science and literature as well as in music. In 1785 he became a freemason. Born was a great leader of thought in masonic circles at the time, and the closer relations which Mozart must thereby have established with him and his friends must undoubtedly have induced him to begin to think seriously about problems, the solutions of which he had hitherto accepted unproved from the mouth of authority. The abandonment of the Mass in C minor, which might, if completed, have been one of Mozart's greatest masterpieces, and one of the greatest settings of the Mass ever produced by any composer, acquires a certain significance to which we shall have occasion to revert more in detail when we come to deal with the composition of "Die Zauberflöte." For the present we must imagine Mozart not as having cast off Catholicism—this indeed was a step which he never definitely took—but as being at that stage of intellectual development when he might well begin to realize that the religion of his fathers, as practised at the time, at any rate, possibly did not provide him with so complete a philosophy of life as he had hitherto been taught to believe.

The German opera at Vienna was given up in the spring of 1783, and its place was taken by a season of comic opera in Italian. Mozart expected that this also would soon come to grief, but he was mistaken. Salieri, who was in command of the Italian opera, was not merely a favourite of the Emperor, but was a very capable composer, and in addition to a very efficient company of singers, he had secured a very capable poet as well. This was Lorenzo Da Ponte. Mozart had met him in 1783 at the house of a certain Baron Wetzlar, a rich Jew, with whom the Mozarts were then lodging. Da Ponte promised Mozart a libretto; but "who knows whether he will be able to keep his word —or willing either? As you know, these Italian gentlemen are very polite to one's face—we know all about them! If he is in league with Salieri, I shall get nothing out of him as long as I live."[1] And so Mozart, after reading through over a hundred libretti by various authors, was reduced to asking Varesco to write him a comic opera, if he was not still too much annoyed about the affair of "Idomeneo."

Lorenzo da Ponte is so important a factor in Mozart's development that it is worth while studying his own personality in some detail.[2] He was born on March 10, 1749, at Ceneda, a little town at the foot of the hills eight miles to the north of Conegliano. The town of Conegliano will be familiar to many readers, both in name and in aspect, from the fact that the painter Cima da Conegliano sometimes introduced its now ruined castle into the landscape backgrounds of his pictures. When we remember Da Ponte's amazing cleverness, it will not surprise us to learn that he was

[1] Mozart to his father, May 7, 1783.

[2] The principal authority for Da Ponte's life is Angelo Marchesan, *Della vita e delle opere di Lorenzo Da Ponte*, Treviso, 1900.



LORENZO DA PONTE

by birth a Jew. His father was a leather-dresser,[1] by name Geremia Conegliano, who wishing in 1763 to take a Catholic as his second wife, had himself baptized with great solemnity, along with his three sons Emmanuel, Baruch and Ananias. According apparently to some custom of the time, he assumed the surname of the bishop who administered the sacrament, Monsignor Lorenzo da Ponte, and his three sons were christened Lorenzo, Girolamo and Luigi respectively, he himself receiving the name of Gasparo. Lorenzo, as our future poet now became, was then fourteen. His education had been of a somewhat haphazard character, and he was generally known by the nickname of "lo spiritoso ignorante." Foreseeing that his father's second marriage would probably lead to financial difficulties, he, with his brother Girolamo, applied to the bishop for admission to the local seminary. Not only were they admitted, but the bishop generously undertook to bear the expense of their maintenance. In two years the brothers had made such rapid progress in Latin that their father determined to make priests of them, although, as Lorenzo tells us, "this was utterly contrary to my vocation and my character." At seventeen he was still incapable of expressing himself in Italian, but he had considerable fluency in writing Latin verses. Those who have had an English public school education will possibly agree that this was no bad introduction to the study of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto and Tasso, whose works he was now taught to appreciate by one of his younger instructors. Lorenzo quickly developed a passion for poetry, Italian as well as Latin. Nor did he confine himself to reading alone; he translated Italian into Latin and

[1] Da Ponte calls him *cordovaniere*, which also means a cordwainer or shoemaker.

Latin into Italian, criticized, commentated, and learnt his authors by heart, until he had acquired a facility in dealing with any kind of style or metre which was to stand him in good stead in later years. On the death of Monsignor Da Ponte, a canon of the cathedral interested himself in him, and sent him to the seminary at Portogruaro, where he tells us that he began the study of philosophy and mathematics, but did not take much pleasure in them, preferring to read "Aminta" and "Il pastor fido" on the sly. In 1772 he was promoted to the post of professor of rhetoric and vice-rector of the seminary; on March 27 of the following year he was ordained priest.[1] Some six months later he severed his connection with the seminary on account of some petty quarrel, and determined to seek his fortune in Venice.

Venice in the latter half of the eighteenth century had much the same reputation among tourists as a city of pleasure that Monte Carlo has at the present day; and it must further be remembered that at that date the ecclesiastical habit did not necessarily imply any great strictness of morals, even in the centre of Catholicism itself.[2] Lorenzo remained a year at Venice, and became involved in a series of disreput-

[1] Jahn and Deiters, followed by Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, have suggested that Da Ponte, although educated for the priesthood, never actually took holy orders; but Marchesan gives the very day of his ordination. Mozart in his letters describes him as "ein gewisser Abbate Da Ponte," and Mr. Krehbiel himself (*Music and Manners in the Classical Period*, London, 1898) mentions a scurrilous pamphlet, printed without date, but evidently during Da Ponte's lifetime, in which he is attacked as "having been Jew, Christian, priest and poet in Italy and Germany."

[2] Beckford, writing from Rome, says, "As for the Abbés, they are not only men of intrigue themselves, but, as Falstaff says of his wit, are the cause of it in others. They are excellent at carrying a billet-doux, or presenting you to a female of easy virtue" (*Familiar Letters from Italy*, London, 1805).

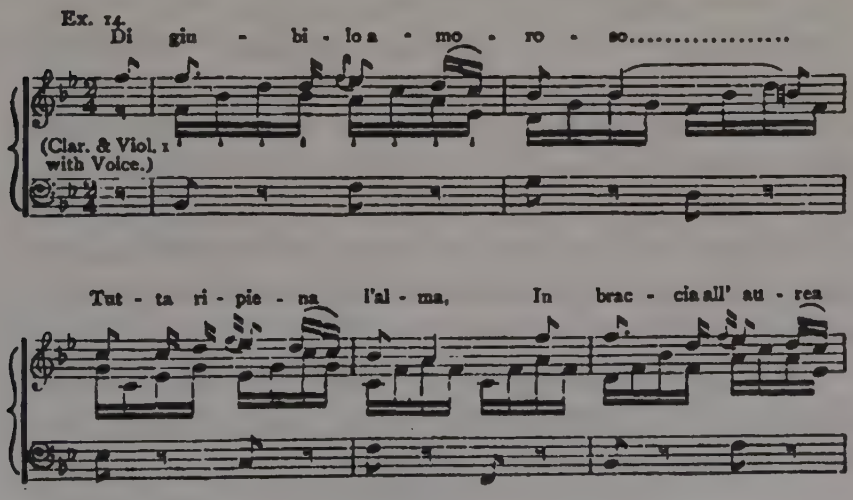
able adventures; in the autumn of 1774, he and his brother were summoned to Treviso to teach "humanity," rhetoric and grammar at the seminary. At the end of two years, however, our poet found it necessary to leave the Venetian state altogether, owing to the scandal which arose, not from his profligacy, but from his unorthodox opinions, and his tendency to publish satirical attacks upon the authorities. His first city of refuge was Gorizia; in May 1778, he proceeded to Dresden, having received the offer of a post there from his friend Caterino Mazzolà, theatre-poet to the Elector of Saxony. On arriving at Dresden he discovered that the letter of invitation was a forgery, devised by some jealous rival as a means of sending him away from Gorizia. He seems to have remained about a year in Dresden, helping Mazzolà to write plays and opera-libretti, making love to various ladies, and composing elegant imitations in Italian verse of the Psalms of David.

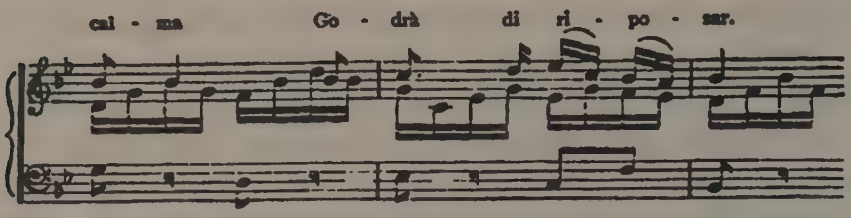
It was probably in 1779 that he went to Vienna armed with a letter of introduction to Salieri. A poem which he had written on the subject of Philemon and Baucis won the approval of Metastasio himself, and although his first four years or so were spent in misery and poverty, he eventually obtained the post of poet to the imperial theatre. His first libretto was "Il ricco d'un giorno," written for Salieri and performed in December 1784. Salieri, after the failure of his German Singspiel "Der Rauchfangkehrer" in 1781, had hoped to re-establish his position by a few successes in other cities. His "Semiramide" was performed at Munich, and Gluck's recommendation secured the production of "Les Danaïdes" at Paris. On his return to Vienna he

found that, although he had apparently nothing more to fear from his German rivals, there were other Italians in the field. Paisiello was on his way back to Italy from St. Petersburg, and Sarti was on his way to St. Petersburg from Italy. Both passed through Vienna in 1784, and both made a considerable success there with their operas. There was also a new Italian poet, the Abbé Giambattista Casti of Montepulciano, who had come back from Russia with Paisiello and had just been commanded to write a comic libretto for him. Salieri no doubt hoped that by securing Da Ponte he would be able to throw Casti and Paisiello into the shade.

"Il ricco d'un giorno," which had been much mutilated in the course of preparation for the stage, did not meet with success. Comic opera was not suited to Salieri's style, and his music was heavy-handed and pompous, without either the natural facility of Paisiello and Sarti or the charm of his own teacher, Florian Gassmann. The following may serve as a specimen of Salieri's style at its best:—

Ex. 14.





We may note that the overture is built on themes from the opera, a proceeding not very usual at that date, but just beginning to come into fashion. The first act ends with an enormous finale, in which a great chorus of merrymakers is effectively contrasted antiphonally with groups of principals; the second, besides a clever quarrelling duet, includes two ensembles on a large scale. The first of these is very spirited, and shows what Da Ponte could do in turning Venetian life to account on the stage. Two lovers—one comic, one serious—are serenading the same lady; they quarrel, start their serenades again, and are finally discomfited by a storm, with a chorus of frightened people and gondoliers shouting their characteristic "stai" and "premi." Salieri was not equal to dealing with this anticipation of "Die Meistersinger." His musical material is pretty enough at times, and the two serenades have the requisite humour and grace; but the moment the stage picture becomes complicated, his themes become commonplace, and his sense of tonality is not wide enough to develop a scene of this kind into a great symphonic movement as Mozart would have done.

Da Ponte's next piece of work was to arrange Goldoni's "Le bourru bienfaisant" as an opera for the Spanish composer Vincente Martin y Solar,

generally known as Martini;[1] he had come to Vienna on account of Nancy Storace, the English soprano, who had sung in one of his operas at Venice. Mozart and Da Ponte had already met in the spring of 1783, when the poet was working for Salieri; and now that Salieri was saying that he would sooner cut off his fingers than set another line of Da Ponte's to music, he was willing enough to enter into partnership with Mozart. It was Mozart who made the suggestion of turning "Le mariage de Figaro" into an opera. The idea was of course due partly to the success which Paisiello's "Barbiere" had obtained. Moreover, Beaumarchais' second comedy had already caused great excitement in Paris, where it had been produced in April 1784 after three years of the best possible advertisement—prohibition by the authorities. The play was still prohibited in Vienna, but Mozart probably foresaw that it would be quite possible to get permission for it in the shape of an Italian opera, and that as long as the play was forbidden, the opera would be certain to arouse curiosity.

Da Ponte and Mozart have been blamed for depriving one of the greatest of French comedies of all its savour, and turning a prophecy of revolution into a sordid intrigue. It is easy for those to whom both works are familiar as classics to pronounce a judgment of this kind. But in 1786 neither Beaumarchais nor Mozart were classics. To that Vienna audience "Figaro" was a play of modern life, and although the scene was supposed to be laid in Spain, there was no great effort wasted on attempting to

[1] He had no connection with Padre G. B. Martini of Bologna, the theorist, or with Martini il Tedesco, the composer of the popular song "Plaisir d'amour," whose real name was Schwartzendorf.

obtain "local colour." When we attempt to revive an eighteenth-century comedy, be it by Beaumarchais, Goldoni, or Sheridan, there is so much work to be done in recovering the atmosphere of the period that any anticipations of modern ideas on the part of the author must almost inevitably be passed over without notice. If a modern composer tries to write in the style of Mozart, the most he can do is to imitate the second-rate composers of Mozart's day, not necessarily from want of genius, but because, if he were able to reproduce the qualities which make Mozart superior to his contemporaries, his music would no longer sound "Mozartian." The blame rests not with the composers and producers of plays or operas, but with our audiences, who take no trouble to make themselves thoroughly at home in the really characteristic life of the particular period.

Anyone who will take the trouble to compare Da Ponte's libretto page by page with the original play will be surprised to see how closely the two correspond. One reason for this is that Beaumarchais himself had had some experience of opera, both as librettist and composer. "Le barbier de Séville" was originally intended as a comic opera, with music arranged by the author from his recollections of the songs and dances he had heard in Spain. It was refused by the Opéra Comique, and required very little alteration to transform it into a "comédie en prose, mêlée d'ariettes," such as was at that date quite admissible at the Comédie Française. Moreover, the piece was modelled in its main outlines on a comic opera of Monsigny with words by Sedaine, "L'on ne s'avise jamais de tout." "Le mariage de Figaro" is less obviously like a comic opera than its predecessor,

but it still contains a certain amount of music, and the fifth act, with its gradual entrance of the various characters, ending in a "vaudeville" sung by each in turn, must certainly have been suggested by the conventional Italian finale, of which Da Ponte gives a very amusing description in his account of his first libretto. Considering the importance of Da Ponte and Mozart in the history of the operatic finale, the passage is worth quoting.

"For good or ill, I managed at last to finish almost the whole of the first act; I had only the finale to write. This 'finale,' which has to be closely connected with the rest of the opera, is a sort of little comedy in itself and requires a fresh plot and a special interest of its own. This is the great occasion for showing off the genius of the composer, the ability of the singers, and the most effective 'situation' of the drama. Recitative is excluded from it; everything is sung, and every style of singing must find a place in it—*adagio*, *allegro*, *andante*, *amabile*, *armonioso*, *strepitoso*, *arcistrepitoso*, *strepitosissimo*, and with this the said finale generally ends. This in the musician's slang is called the *chiusa* or *stretta*—I suppose because it generally gives not one twinge[1] but a hundred to the unhappy brain of the poet who has to write the words. In this finale it is a dogma of theatrical theology that all the singers should appear on the stage, even if there were three hundred of them, by ones, by twos, by threes, by sixes, by tens, by sixties, to sing solos, duets, trios, sextets, sessantets; and if the plot of the play does not allow of it, the poet must find some way of making the plot allow of it, in de-

[1] *Stretta* (from *stringere*) means a pulling together, and in common parlance a pinch, twinge, or wrench, either in a natural or in a metaphorical sense.

fiance of his better judgment, of his reason, or of all the Aristotles on earth; and if he then finds his play is going badly, so much the worse for him!"

About the composition and preparation of "Figaro" there is little known. There is a considerable gap in Mozart's letters just at this time, and our principal source of information is the gossiping Irish tenor, Michael Kelly, who had recently been engaged at the Italian opera in Vienna. Kelly's reminiscences have been quoted so often that there is no need to repeat his anecdotes here; moreover, his book is so amusing and so full of detail that it is well worth reading in its entirety.[1]

Kelly, as might be expected, deals mostly with those external and trivial matters which play so important a part in the autobiographies of all singers and managers; of what was taking place in the minds of Mozart and Da Ponte he can tell us nothing. Da Ponte says that the music was composed in six weeks, and that the composition of the opera was kept a strict secret until it was ready; but Leopold in a letter to his daughter gives us to understand that there was no particular secrecy about the matter, and that Mozart had some considerable trouble in getting the libretto arranged to his own satisfaction as well as to that of the authorities. The first performance took place by command of the Emperor on May 1, 1786. Kelly considered that no opera had ever had a better cast, and that no subsequent performance had ever equalled it. The stories of the intrigues carried on by the Italians against Mozart

[1] *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*, London, 1826. The book was written mainly by Theodore Hook from materials supplied by Kelly. The statements are frequently inaccurate, and foreign names are almost always wrongly spelt: *e.g.* the Kärntnerthor theatre appears as "Canatore."

are numerous, but must be accepted with caution. Kelly talks of himself as having been the only singer who appreciated the composer's genius, and the only one who did not join the cabal against him; but Kelly, like Da Ponte, put together his reminiscences at a date when Mozart was a recognized classic, and was naturally anxious to make the most of his connection with him. I do not wish to cast any doubt on the sincerity of his admiration and personal affection for the composer, but from his description of the first full rehearsal, it is clear that the singers were all doing their best, and that Benucci, who sang Figaro, threw himself into his part in a way that would hardly have been possible for a man who wished the opera to be a failure. It is curious that the company were nearly all Italians, the only exceptions being Kelly, the Irishman, who doubled the parts of Don Basilio and Don Curzio, Nancy Storace (Susanna), who was of Italian origin, though practically an Englishwoman, and Nannina Gottlieb (Barbarina), who eventually sang the part of Pamina in the first performance of "Die Zauberflöte." That Madame Cavalieri took no part may have been due to her intimacy with Salieri; but it is strange that neither Therese Teyber nor Aloysia Lange were among the singers.

The enthusiasm aroused by the first performance was immense; but although the opera was performed nine times in the course of the season, its popularity was short-lived. Martin had already made a success with "Il burbero di buon cuore," and his "Una cosa rara," produced in the following November, soon caused "Figaro" to disappear from the Vienna stage until the appearance of "Don Giovanni" brought Mozart once more into sufficient prominence to make it worth while reviving it.

CHAPTER VII

"LE NOZZE DI FIGARO"—II

"FIGARO," if not the most celebrated, is at any rate probably the most often performed of Mozart's operas, and it is also the most intelligently performed, since it presents no difficulties of interpretation. Its plot is extremely complicated, but it is so admirably constructed that every event develops logically and falls into its proper place in the drama. There is, however, one drawback for the modern opera-goer: "Le nozze di Figaro" was composed, as indeed was the original comedy, for an audience already familiar with the previous history of the characters. English audiences, however, have probably never seen or even read Beaumarchais' "Le barbier de Séville"; they cannot be expected even to have heard of Paisiello's "Barbiere," and not many people are really familiar with the now more celebrated opera of Rossini. Moreover, Rossini's opera, masterpiece as it is, is not the right preparation for Mozart's "Figaro." Paisiello based his opera on the play; Rossini based his on Paisiello's opera. I do not mean that Rossini stole from Paisiello, or that an acquaintance with Paisiello's opera is in any way necessary to the enjoyment of Rossini's. But whereas Paisiello had to translate Beaumarchais into music for the first time, Rossini found the subject already familiar in his own language, so that he did not feel it necessary to

make any effort to preserve the original literary character of the drama, but confined himself to enhancing its purely musical aspect. The result is that all the characters are rather overwhelmed with their own music, and the opera has tended to become more and more a show piece for singers. It is still possible in the humbler theatres of Rome or Naples to hear performances of "Il barbiere" in which the opera is acted with a real sense of comedy, and often sung with considerable ability, though the orchestra may be of the roughest description. But, taken even at its best, Rossini's opera is too completely farcical to be a prologue to Mozart's, and, judged by the standard of grand opera performances, it has inevitably degenerated too much into an exhibition of virtuosity.

Beaumarchais' play is, of course, itself more of a farce than "Le mariage de Figaro"; the subject was a well-worn theme of Italian comic operas, and was possibly chosen for that very reason, that the audience might have the better chance of enjoying the witty dialogue and the picturesque Spanish effects of costume and music. By utilizing the same characters in his second play, the author saved the time and trouble usually spent on exposition; and hence arise the extraordinary complexity and fulness of detail which characterize "Le mariage de Figaro." When given as a play, the spectator can easily follow its intricacies, even without a previous knowledge of "Le barbier"; but the addition of music, and the necessary reconstruction of the play to make it suitable for music, place the opera-goer in a less comfortable position, even if he hears the work performed in his own language.

It is hardly necessary to give as detailed an analysis of the plot as I have done for "Idomeneo," since there will probably be few readers of this book who have not seen the opera more than once, and if they have not grasped the main outlines of the story, they are fairly certain to remember a good many disconnected episodes.

The earlier play tells us how Count Almaviva succeeded in marrying Rosina, a young heiress, in spite of the opposition of her guardian, Doctor Bartolo, who intended to marry her himself. Doctor Bartolo imagined that he had taken every possible precaution, but Rosina was a typical young girl of the Latin race, who was quite ready for an intrigue with a strange young man, and seems to have known instinctively how to arrange all the preliminaries to an elopement, although she had not knowledge enough of the world to foresee what the result of such an elopement might be in later years. One cannot wonder at the state of her character after she has been brought up by the elderly duenna Marcellina and the hypocritical music-master Don Basilio, for Marcellina is the half-discarded mistress of Doctor Bartolo, and Basilio is a typical needy abbé such as Beckford describes, always ready to oblige the highest bidder. The principal agent in this intrigue is, of course, the barber Figaro, who by virtue of his profession knows everybody and is able to enter all houses.

When the curtain rises on "Le nozze di Figaro" the Count and Rosina have been married for some time. The Count has rewarded Figaro for his services by making him his valet, and Don Basilio has also been able to keep up the appearance of having a post in his household. He gives music-lessons when re-

quired, but his principal duty is to assist the Count in any little affair with another woman that may be on hand. Just at this moment the object of the Count's attentions is the Countess's maid Susanna, who is to be married this very day to Figaro. The first act begins in the room which has been assigned to them in the Count's palace; Figaro is measuring the size of it, and Susanna is trying on her bridal dress. Susanna knows perfectly well what the Count's desires are, and has no intention whatever of gratifying them; but Figaro has had too much experience not to be somewhat inclined to jealousy. The Count is still more inclined to jealousy, having had still more experience; and although he has ceased to care much for his wife, he is ready enough to suspect her of an intrigue with the page Cherubino, who is just young enough to be still allowed to take liberties, and just old enough to make the Countess's conduct, at any rate, if not his own, suspicious. Cherubino has a genius for being discovered in the wrong place. The Count has already found him making love to Barbarina, the gardener's daughter; and in the first act he discovers him hidden in Susanna's room, after the boy has overheard his request for an assignation. The page must evidently be got rid of as quickly as possible, and the most convenient way for his master to get rid of him is to give him a commission in the army. Figaro is not altogether sorry himself to see another possible source of danger to Susanna removed, and the act ends with the song "Non più andrai," in which he describes to Cherubino the new life that he will have to lead as a soldier.

Act II introduces us to the Countess. Susanna explains the whole situation to her, and a plot is

laid to stimulate the Count's jealousy by an anonymous letter warning him that his wife has made an assignation with another man. They also arrange that Cherubino shall be dressed up as a girl and sent to meet the Count in the garden in place of Susanna. While he is having some feminine garments tried on, the Count suddenly demands admission. Cherubino manages to escape out of the window, and after the Countess has confessed his presence, both she and the Count are surprised to find only Susanna in the inner room. The situation is complicated by the entrance of Antonio, the drunken gardener, Susanna's uncle, who complains that a man has jumped out of the window on to his flowers. Figaro, on the spur of the moment, says that it was himself, and sustains his part with difficulty, owing to the fact that Cherubino in his flight has dropped his commission, which obliges Figaro to find a reason for having it in his possession. Finally Bartolo and Marcellina appear, accompanied by Basilio. Bartolo has never forgiven Figaro for having carried off Rosina. The Count, of course, is in too exalted a position for Bartolo to attempt vengeance on him; but he hopes to pay Figaro out by preventing him from marrying Susanna and forcing him to marry Marcellina in payment of a debt, thus ridding himself also of the burden of his old flame. The entrance of all these characters in turn provides an admirable example of the regular "finale" described by Da Ponte in his autobiography.

In Act III the case is brought before the Count for trial. He has already had another interview with Susanna, and feels certain of success in that quarter; but suspects some treachery when he overhears her say to Figaro that he has won his case before it is

tried. At the trial, which in the opera does not take place before the audience, as it does in the play, Figaro is condemned to marry Marcellina, as he cannot pay his debt. The discovery is made, however, that Figaro is the illegitimate son of Marcellina and Bartolo, who thereupon decide to legalize their union by marriage. The Countess dictates a letter for Susanna to write, making an assignation for that evening, to which she herself will go in Susanna's clothes. The double wedding of Figaro and Bartolo gives occasion for a dance, in the course of which Susanna contrives to hand the note to the Count. Cherubino once more makes an unexpected appearance, having been provided by Barbarina with female costume, in which he takes his place among the village maidens who come to sing the praises of the Count and Countess.

The last act takes place in the garden at night. Barbarina's simplicity has led Figaro to discover Susanna's assignation, which he believes to be genuine. All the characters arrive in turn, and in the regular old Italian comic-opera manner mistake each other's identity. The Count, after having made love to his own wife under the impression that she is Susanna, and then having caught Figaro with Susanna, whom he supposes to be the Countess, is finally obliged to confess himself in the wrong; he is of course graciously forgiven by the Countess, and the opera ends with the usual chorus of rejoicing.

This libretto, as will be seen, was a curious mixture of the conventional and the unconventional. Beaumarchais' idea was to take an old-fashioned type of comic-opera plot as a foundation and embroider satirical dialogue upon it, the conventional stage

tricks appearing deliberately ridiculous in their new garb of fine literary artifice. It is a device with which the modern theatre has been made familiar enough, both in England and abroad, during the last twenty years. The danger of converting a play of this kind into a comic opera was that while the old tricks would remain as the foundation of the work, the flavour of the new dialogue and, more important still, the new point of view, would disappear entirely. But what Da Ponte was often obliged to sacrifice, Mozart could to some extent reconstitute in another form.

It has always been admitted that "Figaro" is a wonderful example of Mozart's power of characterization. In all previous Italian comic operas, even in Mozart's own early works, the dramatis personæ are not individuals, but types—often enough merely types of singers, but in the best cases not more than theatrical puppets of a stock pattern. What a lesser composer would have done with the same play we may judge from Paisiello's "Il barbiere"; it is simply a later materialization of the original comic-opera idea that underlay Beaumarchais' comedy. Even with Da Ponte's arrangement of "Le mariage de Figaro" a second-rate composer might easily have fallen into the same rut. It is this power of characterization which makes "Figaro" a landmark in the history of opera, as well as in the life of Mozart himself. There had been attempts at characterization before, notably in some of Alessandro Scarlatti's operas, to some extent also in those of Leo and Jommelli, but only in the great tragedies in the Metastasian manner, and it is the exception rather than the rule when even a single personage is clearly and consis-

tently drawn, so as to stand out unmistakably from other personages of the same general category. It is a quality which it seems impossible to explain even in the most technical terms. Later composers attempted to differentiate character by the use of *leitmotiv*, or by ingenious combinations of contrasting rhythms. Mozart uses none of these devices; and although in the ensembles and finales all the characters sing much the same sort of music when they are singing together, we do not feel that there is any necessity to differentiate their rhythms, because we are already fully conscious of their differences of individuality. Susanna and the Countess sing the same notes indifferently in their duet, but Weber's Agathe and Aennchen, for all their contrapuntal effects of contrast, are much less definite and uninterchangeable personalities.

The secret of Mozart's extraordinary skill as dramatist lies in his complete mastery of musical, *i.e.* of symphonic, technique. It will be noticed that the other composers I have mentioned as possessing to some extent the same power, Scarlatti, Leo and Jommelli, are all three of them men whose technical skill in composition was far in advance of that of their contemporaries. As a modern Italian critic[1] has well pointed out, a great composer of operas is essentially a "symphonist" as well, by which the writer does not mean that no man can be considered a great composer of opera unless he has actually written great symphonies in the classical form of Mozart and Beethoven, but that all good dramatic music, requiring from its audiences, as I said in an earlier chapter, a previous understanding of non-dramatic music,

[1] F. Torrefranca, *Giacomo Puccini e l'opera internazionale*, Turin, 1912.

requires *a fortiori* from its composer the power of constructing it. Wagner's sense of organic unity is apparent in every page of his greater works; Verdi, less consciously symphonic in his operas, showed his grasp of essential principles in his string quartet and his Requiem. But the tendency of the second-rate opera-composer, especially of the composer who writes operas to make a living, is simply to imitate those external effects of other operas which he has observed to be successful; and as the imitations are further and further removed from the original stroke of real genius that first served as an example, they become less and less reasonable, and pass into the category of traditions, always useless and often positively evil in their effects, but hallowed by the reverent observance of generations.

The great composer is ready enough to learn from his predecessors, but he does not imitate unless he sees that he can improve upon his original. He may employ traditional forms, but he is never content to leave them half-filled, and he is more often concerned in turning them to new uses. At the time when he wrote "Figaro," Mozart was a fully-developed composer. He had no need to imitate the external effects of his predecessors. He had already shown that he was a complete master of the art of music in almost all its forms. If he had not yet created the new German opera, he had learnt the tricks of old Italian musical comedy in the days of his adolescence, and he had been obliged to acquire the art of turning his hand to anything, an art which, although more important to the dramatic composer than to any other kind of musician, is never acquired by those who after making an early and easy success content themselves with repeating the pattern for the rest of their lives.

And even though he had not produced an Italian comic opera since 1775, he had had a fair amount of practice in that style. Twice he had taken up a comic opera and left it unfinished; of "L'oca del Cairo," begun in 1783, he completed almost all the first act, and a few sketches remain of "Lo sposo deluso" (1784). Neither of these works is of any great importance, though attempts have been made to add another opera of Mozart's to the repertory by putting these and other fragments together on the basis of a new libretto. A similar attempt was made with the little entertainment "Der Schauspieldirektor," composed by Mozart for performance in the Orangery at Schönbrunn on Feb. 7, 1786. It is merely an excuse for showing off the best actors and singers of the court theatres, and the music consists of no more than an overture, two arias, a trio, and a quartet. The main idea illustrated was that of an impresario between two *prime donne*, each of whom gives a separate exhibition of her powers. They quarrel, while the tenor vainly endeavours to pacify them, in a trio; and the final quartet, in which another actor joins, serves as a cheerful conclusion in the style of a vaudeville. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, when Mozart, like Pergolesi, Stradella and Astorga, was beginning to be made the not very heroic hero of a number of absurd legends, this little piece was turned into an opera with Mozart, Schikaneder and Aloysia Lange as the principal characters. Jahn speaks very severely of the dishonour done to Mozart's memory by presenting him in this not very creditable character; but the real dishonour is that of stringing together songs and ensembles from a variety of disconnected sources, and passing off this

jumble as an opera by Mozart. It could only confirm people in the idea that a Mozart opera is simply a concert of agreeable music with a more or less foolish play going on in the background, whereas we have already seen, and shall see still more clearly as we study his later works, that, with the possible exception of "Die Entführung," a Mozart opera is always in principle an organic whole, in which music and drama are developed consistently and simultaneously from beginning to end.

"Der Schauspieldirektor," trifling as it appears at first sight, is a work of remarkable beauty and finish. The overture is much more solidly constructed than one would expect; its themes are light and graceful, but the orchestration is decidedly full, and there is a considerable development section. The whole movement is contrapuntal in spirit, and the fullness and sonority of it are due not to the employment of more instruments than usual, but to the independence and individuality of the part-writing. The vocal numbers are also very contrapuntal in character; Mozart had learnt from the practice of the string quartet how to accompany a beautiful melody with a texture of dramatic counterpoint, which gives the first aria especially a wonderful intensity and intimacy of poetic expression, suited not so much to the theatre as to the chamber. In general style the little piece may be considered to be German rather than Italian, for one feels at once that it is connected with "Die Entführung" and with "Die Zauberflöte" more than with the Italian operas, "Così fan tutte" perhaps excepted. It is therefore of great interest as showing us what Mozart might have achieved with German opera at this

period if he had been given another chance to write it.

It is important to realize also that a marked change was taking place just at this time in the style of popular Italian opera. Three new Italian composers had made their appearance in Vienna during the interval beween "Die Entführung" and "Figaro"—Giuseppe Sarti, Vincente Martin,[1] and Giovanni Paisiello. Of these the last is the best remembered at the present day, and the first is the most interesting. Sarti was a pupil of Padre Martini, and was himself the teacher of Cherubini. He was a man of fifty-five when he came to Vienna in 1784, which accounts for his not understanding Mozart's quartets, since his own style was fully matured and fixed. His opera "I due litiganti,"[2] first produced at Milan in 1782, had met with great popularity in Vienna on its performance in the following year. It is a well-written piece of work, suggesting Cimarosa in its general style, and showing the beginnings of certain effects, such as the *crescendo*, which were afterwards much developed by Rossini.

Paisiello was a composer of a rather different type. His education had been Neapolitan, and in 1776, at the age of thirty-seven, he had been invited to direct the Italian opera at St. Petersburg. Sarti, it may be added, had for a long period lived at Copenhagen, and it may be that in some subconscious way the styles of both composers were influenced by their northern environment. I cannot bring forward any evidence to prove that Danish or Russian folk-song

[1] Martin was, of course, a Spaniard by birth, but he may be counted among Italian composers, like his compatriots Perez and Terradellas.

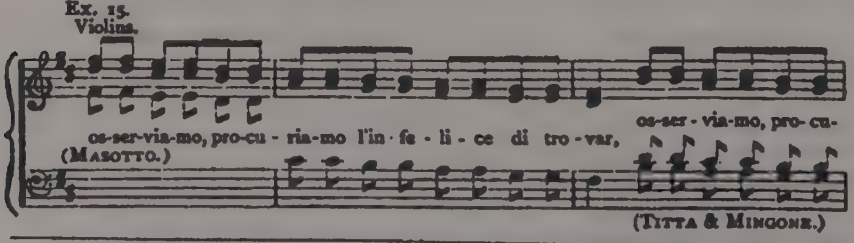
[2] The full title of the opera is "I pretendenti delusi ovvero Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode," but it was generally known and referred to by the shorter name given above.

may be traced in their melodies; but it is at any rate noticeable that both composers—Sarti to a slight and Paisiello to a very marked extent—employ a more simple, naïve and almost childish type of melody than their predecessors of the time of Leo and Logroscino. It was, in fact, this exaggerated simplicity which made Paisiello's reputation; and it is amusing to find that he, who made the most scathing (and not unjust) criticisms on the mild sentimentality of Pergolesi, attained popularity by exactly the same means, though he had not the advantage of an early death.[1]

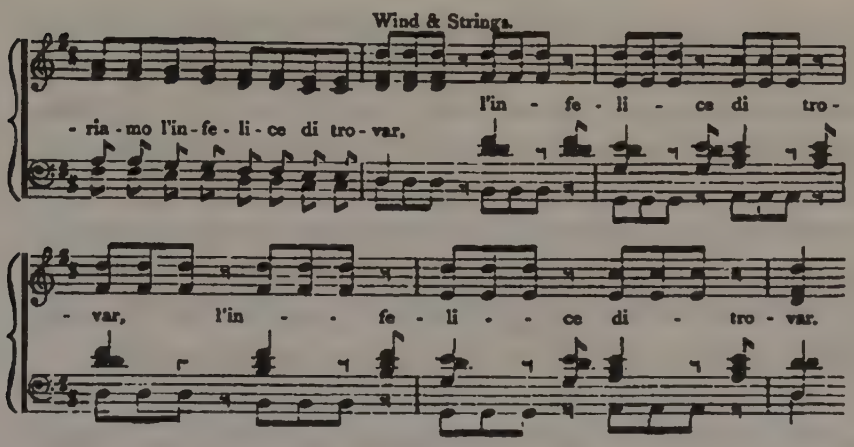
Martin was a much younger man, only two years older than Mozart. His music seems to us nowadays empty and commonplace, and it is difficult to see what could have caused his remarkable success. Judging from the tune quoted in "Don Giovanni" and a perusal of "Una cosa rara" and "L'arbore di Diana," his most noticeable characteristic seems to have been a facility for writing amiable melodies in six-eight rhythm, of a type that recalls "Here we go round the mulberry-bush."

Along with this almost exaggerated simplicity in the arias, the fashionable comic opera had expanded the finale to a considerable extent. But it is very seldom that these long finales contain any music of real interest. Such passages as the following from Sarti's "I due litiganti"

Ex. 15.



[1] Paisiello's criticism of Pergolesi is quoted in the article on the latter composer in Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (second edition).



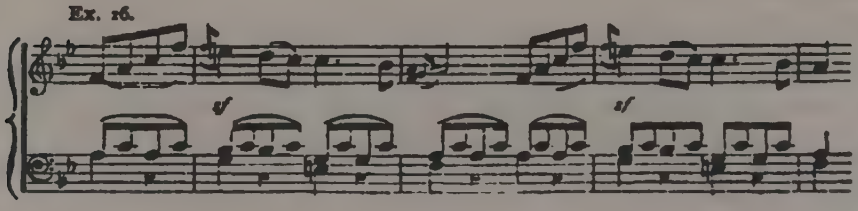
are the staple material of all of them, and they are to be found in Mozart as well. They amount to nothing more than *lo strepitoso, l'arcistrepitoso, lo strepitosissimo.* The whole scheme was designed for inattentive and uncultured audiences: a few pretty tunes that anybody could whistle as he went home, and the physiological excitement of noise and rhythm to bring down the curtain. Nor were great demands made upon the intelligence of the singers; what the arias required most was personal charm, and the finales, being built up on easily-remembered formulæ, gave plenty of opportunity, if not for fine acting, at any rate for hackneyed "business" and any amount of jabbering and shouting.

"I due litiganti," though far below "Figaro" in merit, is at least a more than averagely good specimen of its type. The libretto is well arranged, and the plot sufficiently amusing. There is a Countess who wishes to marry her maid Dorina to a certain Mingone, and a Count who wishes to marry her to his own servant Titta. The Countess, who thinks that her husband no longer loves her, and is arranging Dorina's marriage with a certain ulterior object of his own in view, calls

in to help her Livietta, the soubrette part, and the bailiff Masotto, who succeeds in managing everybody and everything in his own way, and eventually obtains the hand of Dorina for himself. The resemblance of this plot to that of "Figaro" is obvious, and since Sarti's opera came out in 1782 and Beaumarchais' play was not performed until 1784 and not printed until 1785, we have here another proof of the French dramatist's indebtedness to Italian comic opera.[1]

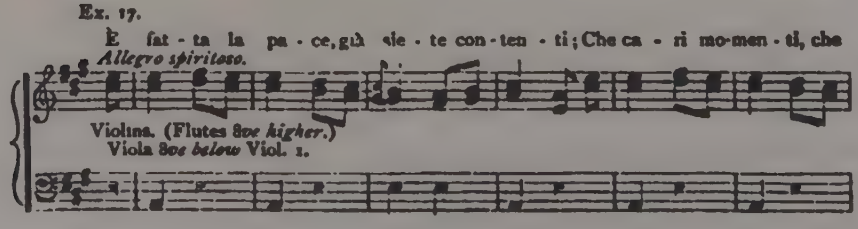
Da Ponte no doubt found Sarti's libretto a very useful guide in his arrangement of "Figaro," and Mozart's recollections of the music are still more obvious. The following bars come from one of the airs of Sarti's Countess, but they might equally well belong to Mozart's:—

Ex. 16.

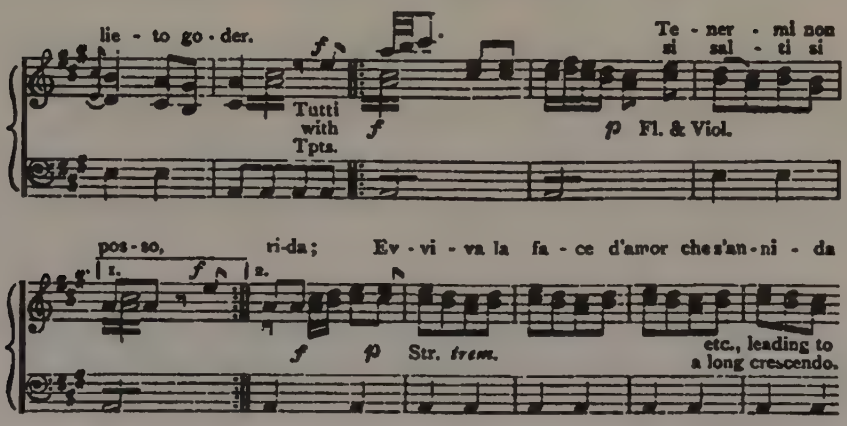


and some of Masotto's songs have a clear suggestion of the character of Figaro, *e.g.*:—

Ex. 17.

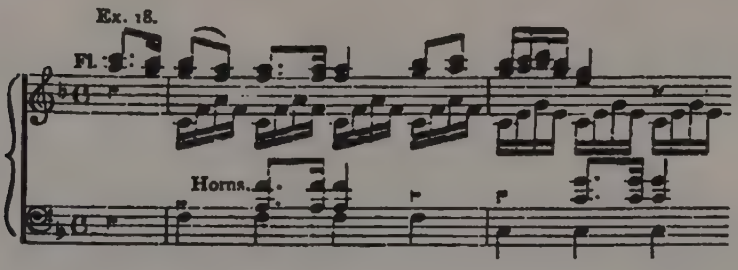

È fat - ta la pa - ce, già sie - te con - ten - ti; Che ca - ri mo-men - ti, che
Allegro spiritoso.
Violins. (Flutes 8ve higher.)
Viola 8ve below Viol. 1.

[1] Not, of course, to Sarti's opera, since "Le mariage de Figaro" was written as early as 1776.


lie - to go - der.
Tutti with Tpts.
Te - ner - mi non si sal - ti si
Fl. & Viol.
pos - so,
ri - da;
Ev - vi - va la fa - ce d'amor che s'an - ni - da
Str. trem.
etc., leading to a long crescendo.

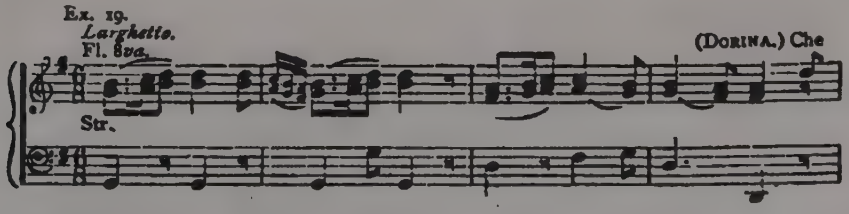
The quartet for Dorina and her three lovers in Act II, though slower in *tempo*, may well have been in Mozart's mind when he wrote "Non più andrai":—

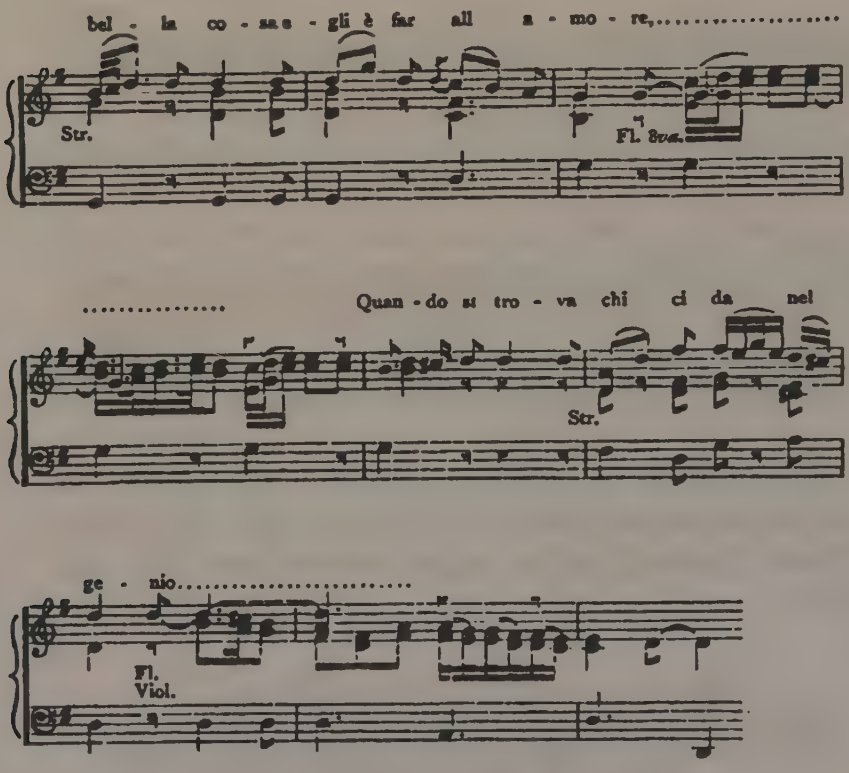
Ex. 18.



and in the course of the first finale, which in its general scheme closely resembles the last finale of "Figaro," we come upon a still more interesting anticipation—the model for "Deh vieni":—

Ex. 19.

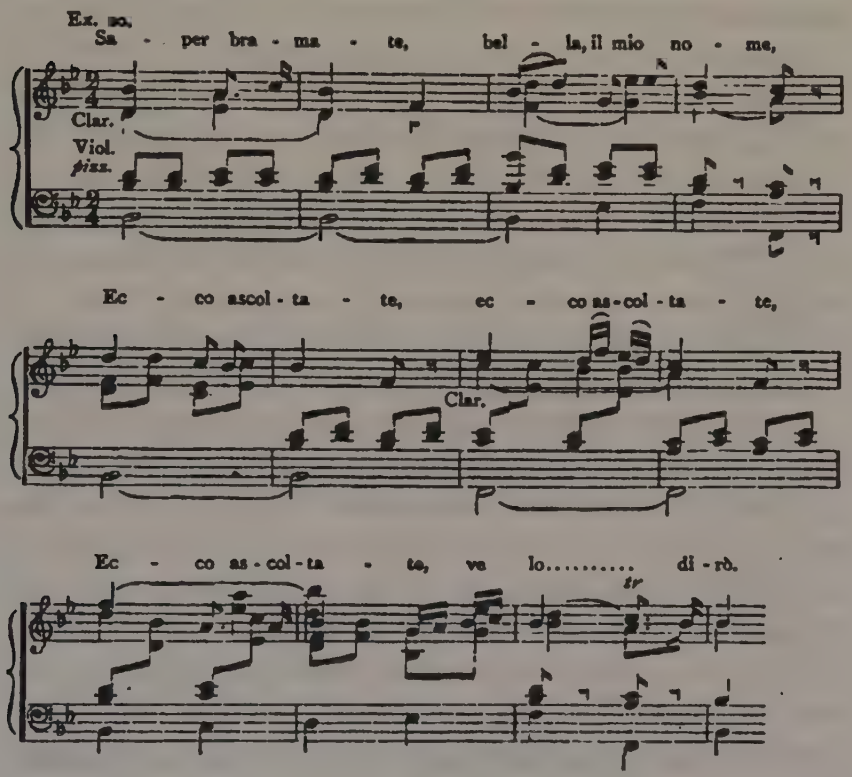




We see from this what is the ancestry of Mozart's famous song; it is a direct descendant of the *canzonetta* which appears regularly in all the early Neapolitan comic operas as a type of popular folk-song, and was carried on as a tradition not only in the later Italian operas, but even in the Viennese imitations of them composed by Fux, Gassmann and other Germans.

Paisiello is familiar to us now only in the two little airs on which Beethoven wrote variations. The influence of his music on "Figaro" is apparent mainly in "Voi che sapete," which was very probably intended as an improvement on the serenade of Count

Almaviva at the beginning of "Il barbiere di Siviglia."[1]



If we look through the table of contents in a copy of "Figaro" we shall at once notice one respect in which that opera differs from its contemporaries. In all conventional Italian operas the principal type of form is the aria. There may be an occasional duet, perhaps a quartet or two, and the usual finales to the acts; but solo arias will be in a large majority. Mozart's "Figaro" contains twenty-eight "numbers," and out of these only fourteen are arias. It is worth

[1] I have left out the mandoline *obbligato* for the sake of clearness, as it is not important during these bars. The introduction, in which it is more prominent, is quoted in score in E. Prout's *The Orchestra*, vol. i. p. 90.

while arranging the various types in tabular form. Alongside is a summary analysis of Martin's "Una cosa rara."

Arias :—

	Act I	Act II	Act III	Act IV	Total	
Figaro	2	—	—	1	3	
Cherubino	1	1	—	—	2	
Countess	—	1	1	—	2	
Susanna	—	1	—	1	2	
Barbarina	—	—	—	1	1	
Basilio	—	—	—	1	1	
Bartolo	1	—	—	—	1	Martin's "Una cosa rara" (8 characters).
Count	—	—	1	—	1	
Marcellina	—	—	—	1	1	
(9 characters)						
	4	3	2	5	14	19
Duets	3	1	2	—	6	4
Trios	1	1	—	—	2	2
Sextets	—	—	1	—	1	1
Choruses	1	—	1	—	2	2
Finales	—	1	1	1	3	2
	9	6	7	6	28	30

We observe that although "Figaro" has the greater number of characters and the smaller number of movements, the arias form just half the total, whereas in Martin's opera they form very nearly two-thirds.[1] This difference of proportion is significant for Mozart's whole attitude towards the musical drama. It might seem at first sight that if recitative is to be treated as a negligible quantity (and in the case of the second-rate composers it certainly is so treated), the aria affords the easiest means of expressing a person's character in music. Mozart thought differently, and

[1] In practice the number of arias in "Figaro" is further reduced by the almost invariable omission of those assigned to Barbarina, Basilio and Marcellina in Act IV.

there he showed himself essentially a reasoner in music as well as a true dramatist. An aria is a soliloquy, or if not a soliloquy, it is an oration which does not submit to interruption or even eventual discussion, since operatic etiquette still kept up to some extent the custom that a singer always left the stage directly his aria was at an end. A duet in the old serious operas was never anything else but an expression of the same sentiment by two persons; in comic opera it was generally an expression of more or less violent mutual abuse. But with the development of what we may call for the moment sentimental opera, it could become a vehicle for conversation, and Mozart saw that character is more effectively as well as more naturally exhibited in conversation than in soliloquy. Susanna has no aria at all in the first act, but the first act is enough to give us a good idea of her personality, because she takes part in three duets and a trio; that is, she holds musical conversation with four separate persons.[1] Her aria in Act II gives us one view of her character, and as the opera progresses we hear her in conversation with almost every other character in the play. Finally in the last act her aria "Deh vieni" gives us a sudden revelation of her in a new aspect.

It is important too to consider the technical methods by which Mozart makes his characters converse. The two commonest types of operatic duet are those in which the two voices either sing in thirds and sixths, in which case we may generally assume that the parties are in love with each other, or else in sharply-contrasted rhythms, in which case the contrary

[1] This is not counting her conversation with Cherubino in plain recitative.

state of affairs may reasonably be inferred. Mozart's duets do not often adopt either principle. When Weber in "Der Freischütz" makes Agathe and Aennchen combine two different themes simultaneously, we may be made to realize that one kind of *Backfisch* is prone to tears and another to giggles, but we do not hear these young ladies carry on any reasonable discussion of the matter in hand.[1] When Figaro and Susanna sing their duet (the second in Act I) they both make use of exactly the same musical themes, but a logical conversation is carried on just as in real life, although it is carried on to the most delightful music. The conversation is logical, because the music is logical in its construction, so logical that, even if the listener does not understand Italian, he can at least follow the relative positions of the argument. Mozart was not the first composer to grasp the possibility of turning the syntactical values of a musical phrase to a dramatic use,[2] but there is no one who can approach him in the skill with which he develops it. For Mozart, having a long experience of all kinds of music, understood perfectly how to express a musical idea in the fewest possible notes. This is a purely technical matter, and is quite independent of the fact that his ideas may have been either more interesting or more numerous than other people's. Schubert, for instance, is a composer

[1] It may perhaps be urged, not without reason, that the business of the drama is carried on in the spoken dialogue, and that the function of the musical numbers is to illustrate single emotional states. But this division of function is exactly what Mozart was trying to break down, although Weber was only very dimly aware of it.

[2] Alessandro Scarlatti, Vinci and Leo use the device both in serious and comic scenes, but naturally more incisively in the latter.

whose brain never ceased pouring out ideas of the most wonderful kind (even if it occasionally happened that Beethoven or Cherubini had given them expression a few years earlier); but he is very deficient in Mozart's power of compression, and takes two bars to say what Mozart could have said in two beats.[1] One can generally judge the nimbleness of a composer's mind by the movements of his basses. The examples already quoted from Sarti and Paisiello will serve to illustrate the point. Their tunes are agreeable, but their basses are commonplace and obvious; we feel at the end of eight bars as we do when some agreeable person makes that sort of pleasant but patently untrue remark about the weather, which one agrees with because it is not worth while taking the trouble to contradict it. Mozart, on the other hand, has in half the time taken up a definite argumentative position which forces our brains into activity, although we are fortunately spared the necessity of carrying on the discussion with him out of our own heads; if Figaro propounds an idea, Susanna is there to turn it round, look at it from her point of view, and draw the only reasonable conclusion.[2]

There can be no more fascinating literature in which to study the art of musical reasoning than the duets and ensembles in "Figaro." To analyse them here is impossible, for it would involve printing them *in extenso*, and to annotate them would be beyond

[1] The reader who is accustomed to "think musically" will understand at once what I mean, and I cannot explain the matter in detail without writing a technical treatise which would be out of place here.

[2] Put into technical language, Figaro, being simple-minded and concerned only with facts as he sees them, states his case in the tonic; Susanna, more nimble of wit, looks forward to possible future developments, and carries the theme through various keys (Act I, No. 2).

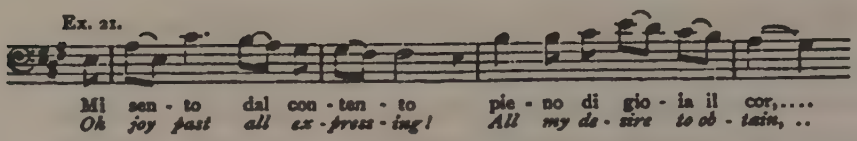
the powers of any ordinary language; the words of the libretto are sufficient explanation in themselves. Only it must be remembered that the reader will require to be familiar enough with Italian to be able to recite the words without the music at their natural *tempo* and with their natural intonations; and he must be ready too to sing each phrase—in imagination at the very least—with a consciousness of the personality to whom it belongs, and (as always in Mozart) with a sense of joy in singing as the most natural and complete expression of any human mind's experience.

+ It is interesting to observe how Mozart has selected the appropriate structural means for the presentation and delineation of his characters. Figaro and Susanna, being active-minded practical individuals not much given to introspection, are presented to us at once in duets. We see their action first upon each other, and then on the rest of the characters. The Countess, on the other hand, makes her first appearance with a soliloquy ("Porgi amor"), and has another even more important soliloquy in the third act ("Dove sono"); she is a woman who from early childhood has had nothing to do except think about herself. When she joins in a trio or an ensemble she is a different person: to the world, her husband included, she is Countess Almaviva, to herself she is "la triste femme délaissée." Cherubino, if less self-centred, is at any rate extremely self-conscious, and he therefore enters with a deliberate exposition of his own character. His second aria ("Voi che sapete") is not entirely self-revealing, since it is a song which had been a song before the play was set to music. Writers of libretti often think that it

is effective to drag in songs simply as performances of music into the course of an opera; but the device, so far from being a saving of trouble, is one which requires the most careful handling, since it upsets the balance of an opera if music is introduced as "music," *i.e.* as an abnormal form of expression, when the whole principle of opera is that music should be the one form of expression which is consistently normal. The little duet for Cherubino and Susanna is admirably constructed; it is always Susanna who takes the lead, first encouraging the page (modulation to the dominant), then restraining him (modulation to the subdominant). Only just at the end does Cherubino burst out into an amusingly passionate expression of puerile chivalry (transition to G minor), and practical Susanna ends the duet as it began.

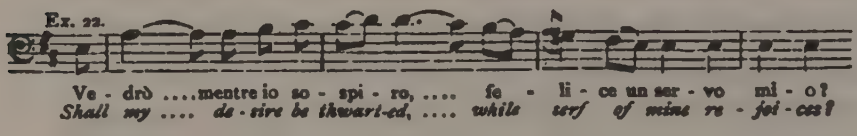
The Count, as a man of intense energy, belongs to the other group, and shows himself to us first in ensembles. One might almost say he has not time to sing an aria, until the instant comes when he has to stop taking action for a moment and think over his position. When he does sing his aria ("Vedrò mentre io sospiro") it is a wonderful piece of self-revelation. To attempt to translate the aria into words is superfluous, and when Beaumarchais has already defined the character, it would be absurd for me to try and deduce it from Mozart's music. A better light can be thrown on it from a musical point of view by comparing the aria with other pieces of music, and studying the points of similarity and the points of difference. One commentary is close at hand; we see an obvious connection between the Count's utterance half aside, half to Susanna:—

Ex. 21.



and the fierce phrase of the aria:—

Ex. 22.



At one moment he seems to have something in common with Bartolo, grotesque in his thirst for vengeance; at another he almost suggests the calculated cruelty of Beethoven's Pizarro.

The other characters are of less importance, but each is drawn with a firm hand. Even little Barbarina in her one half-finished arietta has her function; her *naïveté* adds by force of contrast to the spirit of intrigue that dominates the last act, perhaps all the more because we can never feel quite sure how far that *naïveté* is genuine. Bartolo is a relic of an older generation, and is appropriately represented in a full-blown *buffo* aria of the old-fashioned type. Marcellina and Don Basilio have each an aria in the last act, but one cannot help feeling that the composer had nearly forgotten them altogether, and was suddenly reminded that they must not be deprived of their operatic rights. Yet they are vivid enough in the preceding acts, and to tell the truth, their solo arias do not add much to their characters. They are both people to whom a certain artificiality of manner has become habitual, and we therefore hardly recognize them when they throw off their masks, because there is more individuality in the mask

than in the face behind it. It is seldom that either of them is adequately presented on the stage. But I recall a performance at Vienna a few years ago (under Mahler's direction) in which Marcellina, instead of being a neat and unpretending general-utility actress, was brought on as a stout and vigorous woman of five-and-forty or so, glaringly over-dressed, with a red face, thick black eyebrows meeting in the middle, and a very unmistakable moustache.[1] Don Basilio too did not let us forget that Beaumarchais described him as abbé and organist. And I look back also to another performance of "Figaro" given by the Moody-Manners company one hot August evening in London, memorable for a Don Basilio admirably translated into his English equivalents, and for as good an ensemble and as spirited and musicianly a rendering all through as I have ever seen on any stage.

"Figaro" is not an opera that presents great difficulties in performance. It requires, of course, as high a standard of singing and acting as it is possible to obtain, as well as the most careful rehearsal; but it makes no abnormal demands on the voices, and it does not confront the stage-manager with intricate problems such as are involved in the production of "Don Giovanni" or "Die Zauberflöte." It demands more than anything else a sense of humour and common sense. The producer of "Figaro" must be careful to avoid "Dresden china" effects; "Figaro" in Mozart's day was a play of contemporary life, and though it would be absurd to play it in any costumes

[1] The comic old woman with a great desire for matrimony was a stock figure of Italian opera in the seventeenth century. She was in those days generally acted by a man, as in modern pantomimes. In modern opera she appears to have survived only in the librettos of the late Sir W. S. Gilbert.

later than 1786, it must yet present to the audience a sense of almost grim realism. It is apparently very difficult in an opera to prevent the actors and actresses from looking like modern ladies and gentlemen at a fancy-dress ball; but the effort must be made, even at the risk of spoiling what is to many listeners the essential charm of Mozart. The Vienna performance to which I have alluded set the right atmosphere from the first rise of the curtain; the bedroom of Figaro and Susanna, instead of being a vast rectangular apartment upholstered in the most sumptuous *rococo* style, as is too often the case, was nothing more than the shapeless space concealed behind the semicircular partition forming the apse of some unseen throne-room. On the dirty walls of canvas held up by wooden battens there hung in strips the rotting remains of what had once been a panel of crimson damask; the furniture was a miscellaneous collection of objects discarded from other rooms, and a row of pegs to hang dresses on formed a convenient place of concealment for Cherubino and the Count. It was the real eighteenth century; not the gay white and gold of stucco and porcelain, but the century of that *droit de seigneur* which the Revolution was to clear away. One felt at once that Figaro and Susanna were not opera-singers, but real domestic servants; that Don Basilio, for all his priestly office, was little better; and one was always conscious that the Count was compromising himself by being seen there for a single moment. Another notable scene was used for the second part of Act III, beginning (after the well-known quadruple recitative) with the recitative for Barbarina and Cherubino; the idea was taken from the Esterházy palace at Kismarton (Eisenstadt) in

Hungary. Half-way down, across the stage ran a colonnade so enormous in scale that the square plinths of the columns were of more than a man's height, while the shafts themselves disappeared into the flies; beyond the columns one saw between their masses a garden stretching far away into the distance. Afternoon was merging into evening; Susanna had only just light enough to write her letter holding the paper up against one of the great plinths before the chorus of country girls came dancing in from outside, conducted, if I remember rightly, by the ubiquitous organist, and followed by the arrival of the rest with torches. It was a country festivity, held out of doors, with the Count and Countess graciously honouring it by their presence. The fandango[1] was danced behind the colonnade in the fantastic light of the torches, and the disposition of the stage thus emphasized the "class distinctions" which provide the turning-point of the play, and also allowed the Count to make his part in the dance scene more prominent than can conveniently be done if the festivities take place, as they usually do (most inappropriately, considering that the merry-makers are all peasants and domestic servants) in the throne-room itself.

It is this Beaumarchais atmosphere that the producer must make every possible effort to recover. No pains must be spared to make the story clear, especially that very important part of the story which takes place before the curtain rises. Much of the effect will therefore depend upon the dialogue. If

[1] The melody of the fandango is Mozart's one attempt at local colour. It seems to have been well known in Vienna, as it appears in a very similar form in Gluck's "Don Juan" ballet. Gluck's arrangement and the traditional Spanish form of the melody are quoted in the appendix to Jahn's biography (German editions only).

the opera is given in Italian, it must be sung by people who can express themselves naturally and fluently in that language, or the recitatives will degenerate into oratorio. When it is given in German or English, the recitatives are generally omitted and spoken dialogue substituted, but the loss is very considerable, as I have pointed out before. It is true that "Figaro" will bear the loss better than Mozart's other operas; but the break of continuity is always painful, and distorts the relative emotional values of speech and song. Still there is little chance of German being made to sound natural set to Italian formulæ, and although English has much more affinity to Italian, the problem of fitting really witty English dialogue to Mozart's notes is one that cannot be solved in a hurry. It is at least better to leave out the recitatives than to make them sound stupid and dull.

CHAPTER VIII

"DON GIOVANNI"—I

THOUGH the success of "Figaro" at Vienna was only momentary, there was at any rate one city where the opera was appreciated to the full. Prague had already seized upon "Die Entführung" with delight, and when "Figaro" was performed there in the winter of 1786, enthusiasm knew no bounds. The musical conditions of Prague were at that time quite different to those of any other European capital. Not only had the Bohemians as a nation a remarkable natural talent for music, but throughout the country, even in the poorest villages, music, especially instrumental music, seems to have been regarded as a part of elementary education, equally important with reading and writing. Burney's description of his journey across Bohemia in September 1772 gives an interesting picture of the kingdom from both the artistic and the economic point of view.

"The country is flat, naked, and disagreeable to the eye, for the most part, all the way through Austria, Moravia, and Bohemia, as far as Prague, the situation and environs of which are very beautiful.

"The dearness and scarcity of provisions of all kinds on this road were now excessive; and the half-starved people, just recovered from malignant fevers, little less contagious than the plague, occasioned by bad food and by no food at all, offered to view the most melancholy spectacles I ever beheld.

"I crossed the whole kingdom of Bohemia, from south to north; and being very assiduous in my inquiries, how the common people learned music, I found out at length that not only in every large town, but in all villages, where there is a reading and writing school, children of both sexes are taught music. At Teuchenbrod [Deutschbrod], Janich, Czaslau, Böhmischbrod, and other places, I visited these schools; and at Czaslau,[1] in particular, within a post of Colin, I caught them in the fact. . . . I went into the school, which was full of little children of both sexes, from six to ten or eleven years old, who were reading, writing, playing on violins, hautbois, bassoons, and other instruments. The organist had in a small room of his house four clavichords, with little boys practising on them all. . . Many of those who learn music at school go afterwards to the plough, or to other laborious employments; and then their knowledge of music turns to no other account, than to enable them to sing in their parish church, and as an innocent domestic recreation, which are, perhaps, among the best and most unexceptionable purposes that music can be applied to.

"It has been said by travellers, that the Bohemian nobility keep musicians in their houses; but in keeping servants, it is impossible to be otherwise, as all the children of the peasants and trades-people, in every town and village throughout the kingdom of Bohemia, are taught music at the common reading schools, except in Prague, where, indeed, it is no part of school-learning; the musicians being brought thither from the country."

[1] Czaslau is now a town of some 7000 inhabitants, about 50 miles east of Prague.

Burney tells us further that "their [the Bohemians'] first nobility are attached to the court of Vienna, and seldom reside in their own capital"; but Mozart seems to have found a very brisk social life going on there when he visited Prague in January 1787 at the invitation of his admirers there. His oldest friends in Prague were Franz Duschek and his wife, who had relatives in Salzburg, and had known the Mozarts since 1777. Duschek was a pianist of ability, and his wife a singer. The Duschecks were very active in spreading the enthusiasm for Mozart's works, and he had another very influential friend in old Count Thun, whose daughter-in-law, the wife of Count Franz Josef Thun, was a great leader of musical society in Vienna, and had always done more than any one else to forward Mozart's interests there. We must imagine Prague as a capital of a very provincial type, very conscious of its own individuality, with a fairly numerous aristocracy, living in magnificent palaces, dating mostly from the early part of the century,[1] attended by suites of musical servants—a society, wealthy and artistic enough to encourage a local Italian opera, but not to maintain it on a very firm footing. The opera was under the management of one Pasquale Bondini, and had only recently transferred its performances from Count Thun's private theatre to the new national theatre built in 1783.[2] Bondini's financial position was generally precarious, but the unprecedented success of "Figaro," which came very near to having an uninterrupted run all through the

[1] Prague is one of the best places for studying the genius of the architect Fischer von Erlach.

[2] This theatre is still in use; its dignified façade and handsome external staircases have remained unaltered.

winter, fully re-established it. Mozart's visit in January 1787 naturally increased his popularity; it was a round of social distractions, with an occasional concert, at which he delighted his audience by extemporizing on themes from "Figaro." Bondini seized the moment at which Prague was most delighted with Mozart and Mozart with Prague, and concluded an agreement with the composer for a new opera to be produced in the forthcoming winter.

Mozart returned to Vienna in February, and consulted Da Ponte about a libretto. It was Da Ponte who suggested the legend of Don Juan as a suitable subject. With regard to the composition of the opera we have practically no information that is at all reliable, although no opera has given rise to such a rich crop of fatuous anecdotes. How far composer and librettist collaborated in the design of the drama it is impossible to say. Da Ponte in his autobiography gives a very picturesque account of his own fluency in composition, but it is hardly advisable to trust him in every detail, since the autobiography was written some forty years later, when "Don Giovanni" had become an accepted classic. Moreover, it was written for an American public, just after Garcia had produced the opera in New York. There is, however, no doubt about the fact that the poet was extremely busy at this moment, since he had two other libretti to write at the same time—"L'arbore di Diana" for Martin, and "Axur, re d'Ormuz" for Salieri. The libretto which he himself regarded as the best of the three was "L'arbore di Diana," the theme of which was the dissolution of monastic establishments by Joseph II, amusingly and gracefully represented by a story of how Cupid

and Endymion outwitted the goddess of chastity and her secluded nymphs. This play was in all probability original; the other two, however, were not. "Axur" was an Italian re-arrangement of Beaumarchais' libretto "Tarare," which Salieri had produced unsuccessfully in Paris, and "Don Giovanni," as we shall see, was almost entirely appropriated from the work of another man. We may indeed not unreasonably suspect that Da Ponte suggested this subject to Mozart not so much because of its supposed appropriateness to the composer's temperament, as because the material happened to be ready to the poet's hand.

Mozart probably began on the work at once, as was his usual custom, and then left the greater part to be finished at the last moment. He went to Prague in September 1787, and lodged in a house near the theatre; but most of his time is said to have been spent at the Villa Bertramka, a little house in the suburb of Smichow, on the west side of the river Moldau. The house is still standing, and Mozart's room still preserves its decorated ceiling, its dark-green flowered wall-paper and its parquet floor, just as they were in his day, though the surroundings have long ago been transformed into an ugly workmen's quarter. Da Ponte arrived on the 8th of October, and the opera, after several delays, owing partly to the illness of singers, was finally produced on October 29. It is clear from Mozart's letters to his friend Gottfried von Jacquin that the opera was ready for performance some time before; but the story of his having written down the overture so late that the band had to play it at sight is very possibly true. The various amplifications of this story have however no foundation, and

the popular anecdote about Constanze having to keep Mozart awake all night by telling him fairy-tales while he composed the overture is of course utterly absurd. There is some probability that Constanze's very imaginative reminiscences of her first husband were put into shape by Friedrich Rochlitz, and if that is the case, they are still less worthy of credence. Rochlitz was a romantic journalist possessed of an unctuous fluency very characteristic of second-rate German literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, and recent research has proved more than once that he had no scruples in inventing the wildest untruths about the private lives of musical celebrities.[1]

Another curious story has been circulated to the effect that Mozart played three separate overtures through to Duschek and asked his advice as to which was the best. The overtures were said to have been in E flat, C minor (a free fugue) and D respectively, the last being, of course, the one that we have. This story is almost more preposterous than the previous one, for the opera must have been got into shape as a whole, if not actually finished, at the time of this supposed interview, and in this case it is inconceivable that Mozart could ever for a moment have contemplated an overture in any key other than D, since each of his operas is designed to begin and end in one and the same key. "Idomeneo" begins in D, each of the three acts ends in D, and the great aria of Idomeneo himself in Act II is in D. "Die Entführung" begins and ends in C, Constanze's great aria

[1] Rochlitz is solely responsible for the legend of Astorga (see Grove's *Dictionary*) which was accepted as historical truth by all writers on music until Dr. Hans Volkmann in 1911 brought forward conclusive documentary evidence in refutation of it.

being also in C. "Figaro" begins and ends in D, so does "Don Giovanni"; "Così fan tutte" and "Tito" in C, "Die Zauberflöte" in E flat. It is important that this principle should be clearly realized, since it shows that Mozart viewed his operas always as continuous musical wholes, no less consistent in tonality than his symphonies or concertos.

The success of the new opera was complete from everybody's point of view. Guardasoni, the stage-manager, told Da Ponte that all impresarios and singers ought to bless his name and Mozart's, for as long as they lived there would never be any more bad seasons. Mozart conducted four performances in the same week, and returned to Vienna in the middle of November.

Guardasoni was quite right in coupling the poet's name with the composer's in his congratulations, for although Da Ponte undoubtedly owes his immortality to the fortunate chance which brought him into contact with Mozart, there can be no less doubt that Mozart's three great Italian comic operas were as deeply indebted to their librettist as Verdi's later operas were to the literary skill of Boito. It is therefore very desirable to study Da Ponte's poem in some detail, and in particular to investigate the previous history of the Don Juan legend as treated in the theatre.[1]

It has generally been asserted that the story of Don Juan first made its appearance in a Spanish play called "El burlador de Sevilla," written by Gabriel Tellez, better known under the name of Tirso de Molina, in the early part of the seventeenth century.

[1] For this survey of the earlier Don Juan plays I am indebted mainly to an exhaustive article by Arturo Farinelli in the *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, Turin, 1896.

It has also been asserted that Don Juan Tenorio was an historical personage, and that he came of a noble family well known in Spain. There is, however, no very satisfactory evidence for this, and it is even doubtful whether the play "El burlador" is really the work of the author to whom it is attributed.

The character of Don Juan falls into two easily separable aspects, Don Juan the profligate and Don Juan the blasphemer. It is indeed only in the second case that we get a clearly defined story, and this story is in its main ideas much older than the seventeenth century. Nor is it confined to Spain. It was a popular idea in many countries that to insult the dead or anything connected with them was a crime which inevitably led to the most awful punishment, and there are many legends which illustrate this in the folk-lore of Iceland, Scandinavia and Germany, as well as in that of Southern Europe. The idea of statues coming to life dates back, of course, to classical times.

The profligate on a grand scale is really a totally different character. There are innumerable legends of passionate and brutal rebels against all moral law, especially in Spain, where the sinner is generally related to have repented at last, and to have been converted to a life of piety and faith. Plays on this subject were naturally encouraged by the clergy, and all through the seventeenth century the story was familiar in Germany through the plays of the Jesuits, in which the hero is called Leontius. Leontius is almost always described as an Italian, and it is probable that the play came to Germany from Italy, although it may have originated in Spain. A notable feature of the play is the "Larva Mundi," a female

figure symbolical of the world and its pleasures; she appears beautiful at first sight, but on closer investigation turns out to be a skeleton or a corpse. It is interesting to find that this figure also appears in Emilio de' Cavalieri's oratorio "La rappresentazione dell' Anima e del Corpo." It should be noted that in most of the "Larva Mundi" plays the sins of Don Juan or Leontius are not so much of the flesh as of the spirit.

It is apparently impossible to trace the immediate sources of the "Burlador," but it seems probable that some sort of legend must have developed out of a combination of the two main types described, which eventually took on a specifically Spanish character. The play is a long straggling series of scenes, in which Don Juan makes love to various ladies, and is finally taken down to Hell. His attempt upon Donna Anna, followed by the duel and the death of her father, does not take place until the second act. The play opens, however, with a similar adventure, of which Isabella, the betrothed of Ottavio, is the heroine. The other female characters are two peasant girls, each of whom is seduced in turn by Don Juan. Don Ottavio, the respectable gentleman, the Commendatore and his statue, the peasant rival, and the comic servant of Don Juan are all presented in much the same form that they take in later plays. It should be noted too that after the statue has carried Don Juan off to Hell, the comic servant gives a full account of his sad end, and the play ends with the happy nuptials of the other characters.

About the middle of the seventeenth century an Italian version appeared at Naples, the main point of difference being the great development of the

parts given to the Italian conventional masks. Harlequin is Don Juan's servant, and Pantaloon also has a part. The play must indeed have been what we should call a "harlequinade," as it was customary for the masks to have the fullest liberty in improvising comic business. As in the original play, so here again we may say that there is no female character who can be considered as having a heroine's part; Don Juan proceeds from seduction to seduction until the scene with the statue and the final tableau, in which he is shown burning in Hell and tormented by demons.

The popularity of this extravaganza caused various other Italian versions to be put on the stage, and the play proceeded by way of Lyons (1658) to Paris in 1659. In 1665 Molière brought out a "Don Juan" which contrasts severely with the buffoonery of the Italian versions, and also with the earlier French versions, which had merely imitated the Italian play in a crude and inartistic manner. Molière's Don Juan is a refined and perverse Parisian aristocrat; his servant Sganarelle describes him with the words "Voilà de mes esprits forts, qui ne veulent rien croire." The murder of the Commendatore does not take place on the stage; it is merely alluded to as having occurred six months before. There is one very important addition to the story—Donna Elvira, whom Don Juan has abducted from a convent and then deserted. In spite of his cruelty, she preserves her devotion for Don Juan up to the end, although when she first appears she is more indignant than affectionate. But in the fourth act she says to him, "Ce n'est plus cette dọne Elvire qui faisoit des vœux contre vous, et dont l'âme irritée

ne jetoit que menaces, et ne respiroit que vengeance. Le ciel a banni de mon âme toutes ces indignes ardeurs que je sentois pour vous, tous ces transports tumultueux d'un attachment criminel, tous ces honteux emportemens d'un amour terrestre et grossier, et il n'a laissé dans mon cœur, pour vous, qu'une flamme épurée de tout le commerce des sens, une tendresse toute sainte, un amour détaché de tout, qui n'agit point pour soi, et ne se met en peine que de votre intérêt." This treatment of Donna Elvira is very important, as it helps us to understand her character as it appears in Mozart's opera. Donna Anna, it must be observed, does not come into Molière's play at all.

The play had fifteen performances, and then disappeared from the stage, except in Thomas Corneille's rearrangement in verse, until 1847. It is altogether an exception among Don Juan plays. Molière wrote it with reluctance under pressure from his actors, and was so little satisfied with it that he never printed it in his lifetime. He seems to have thought that he could put an end to the absurdities of the Italian play by transforming it into a satire on contemporary life; but he forgot that the episode of the statue was entirely inappropriate to a play of this kind. "Votre figure de Don Pèdre baisse la tête," said a lady to Molière, "et moi je la secoue." The story was too extravagant to be treated seriously, and it was even considered that the play was dangerous to public morals. The Abbé Terrasson, whom we shall meet with again in a later chapter, took the view that "rien n'est plus funeste à la morale que des pièces de théâtre telles que *le Festin de Pierre*, où un méchant homme

n'est puni qu'après avoir porté le vice et le crime à un point où personne ne veut aller, et auquel même n'arrivent que très peu de scélérats."

In 1676 Don Juan made his appearance in England under the name of "The Libertine," a play by Thomas Shadwell. The printed edition is preceded by a preface of some interest, as it shows us clearly what the general attitude of the day was to the story and its dramatic treatment.

"The story from which I took the hint of this Play, is famous all over Spain, Italy and France: It was first put into a Spanish play (as I have been told), the Spaniards having a Tradition (which they believe) of such a vicious Spaniard, as is represented in this Play. From them the Italian Comedians took it, and from them the French took it, and four several French plays were made upon the story.

"The character of The Libertine, and consequently those of his friends, are borrowed; but all the Plot, till the latter end of the Fourth Act, is new: And all the rest is very much varied from anything which has been done upon the subject.

"I hope the Readers will excuse the Irregularities of the Play, when they consider, that the Extravagance of the subject forced me to it: And I had rather try new ways to please, than to write on in the same Road, as too many do. I hope that the severest Reader will not be offended at the Representation of those vices, on which they will see a dreadful punishment inflicted. And I have been told by a worthy gentleman, that many years ago (when first a play was made upon this story in Italy) he has seen it acted there by the name of 'Atheisto Fulminato,' in Churches, on Sundays, as a part of devotion: and

some, not of the least Judgment and Piety here, have thought it rather an useful moral, than an incouragement to vice."

Shadwell, who attempts to put some sort of dramatic construction into the legend by the introduction of a heroine who pursues Don John in man's clothes in order to avenge herself, ends the play with the descent of Don John, still unrepentant, into Hell, followed by three lines of moral sentiments from the Statue, after which there is an epilogue spoken by Jacomo, the Don's servant. We cannot say that virtue is rewarded, as Jacomo is the only character of importance left alive, and he is rather a canting hypocrite; but at any rate vice is punished, so no exception can be taken to the morals of the play. Yet on reading it through it is fairly clear that Jacomo and Mr. Shadwell had a few qualities in common. The play is perhaps tedious to the modern reader, but there is no doubt about the audience having their full money's worth of murder, blasphemy and rape, with the pleasing horrors of a fine spectacular effect at the end, heightened by Purcell's very dramatic music. A glance at "Epsom Wells" or any other of Shadwell's plays will show that his audiences went to the theatre with about as much desire of moral edification as ours do. The irregularities of the play, for which the author apologizes, are of course its irregularities of construction, to which the theatre-goers of that day were supposed to be more attentive than we are. It is noteworthy that as early as 1676 the subject was considered extravagant, even in England where it was fairly new, and the same view was held a century later, in spite of the success of the piece. "The Incidents are so cramm'd together in

it, without any consideration of Time or Place, as to make it highly unnatural. The villainy of Don John's Character is worked up to such an Height, as to exceed even the Limits of Possibility, and the Catastrophe is so very horrid, as to render it little less than Impiety to represent it on the Stage."[1]

In 1760 a curious play by Goldoni was performed at Venice, entitled "Il teatro comico." The problem of the play is one which concerns us but little: it is the conflict between the old Italian extemporary comedy of masks and the new comedy of manners, in which the actors were expected to appear as normal human beings and speak only those lines that the author had set down for them.

The characters of the play are the manager, poet, and actors of a theatre, who are engaged in rehearsal. At the end of the first act there occurs a speech which is of interest to us. Lelio, the poet, whose scenes of tenderness, he says, will make not only the audience but the very chairs weep, and whose scenes of force will make the boxes themselves clap their hands ("he must be a poet of the seventeenth century," remarks one of the actors)—Lelio has read them his new play, written in three-quarters of an hour—a mere skeleton of a plot to furnish the usual scenes of buffoonery between Pantaloon, Harlequin and the rest—and has been told by the leading lady that he is a lunatic. "Is this the way they treat a man of my parts? I swear to heaven I'll have revenge. They shall see who I am. I will have my comedies acted in spite of them, if it is only by a troupe of strolling players at a village fair. Who are these people who are going to reform the theatre? Do they think that

[1] David Erskine Baker, *The Companion to the Playhouse*, London, 1764.

by producing two or three new plays they have killed all the old ones? Never! and with all their novelties they will never make as much money as was made for so many years with 'Il gran Convitato di Pietra.'"

Goldoni had good reason to know what he was talking about, for in 1788 he had written a Don Juan play himself. In chapter XXXVIII. of his memoirs he relates how he had been made a fool of by Signora Passalacqua, an actress with whom he had a liaison, and in the following chapter we read how he took a curious revenge on her. His plan was to write a Don Juan play in which everybody would recognize under the character of Don Giovanni, Carino (a shepherd), and Elisa (a shepherdess) the personalities of Vitalba, his own rival, himself (Carlino, diminutive of Carlo), and the Passalacqua, whose name was Elisabetta. The play is not in itself interesting, and deals with Don Giovanni mainly as a "fulminated atheist."

Here again we get a prefatory criticism on the drama. "Every one knows that wretched Spanish Tragi-comedy which the Italians call 'Il Convitato di Pietra,' and the French 'Le Festin de Pierre.' I have always regarded it with horror in Italy, and I never could understand why this farce should have maintained itself so long, attracting crowds of spectators and being regarded as the delight of a cultivated nation. Italian actors held the same opinion, and either in jest or in ignorance, some said that the author had made a bargain with the devil to have it kept on the stage. I never thought that I should have worked on the subject myself; but having learnt French enough to read it, and seeing that Molière and Thomas Corneille had treated it, I undertook to present the subject to my own country in order that

the devil's bargain should be kept with a little more decency. I could not give the play the same title, because in my work the statue of the Commendatore does not speak or walk or go out to dinner. I thought I ought not to suppress the thunderbolt which strikes Don Giovanni, because a wicked man ought to be punished; but I managed this event in such a way that it might be considered both as the immediate effect of God's anger, and as the result of a combination of secondary causes."

Here again we see that the Don Juan play is the play which everybody knows, which everybody laughs at as silly and old-fashioned, and which everybody always goes to see.

Similarly in Germany, as Jahn tells us, "Don Juan" belonged to the standing repertory of the improvising actor from the beginning of the eighteenth century. At Vienna up to 1772 an improvised "Steinernes Gastmahl" was regularly given during the octave of All Souls—"a proof that Don Juan's dissolute life was contemplated with pleasure, and that morality was considered as abundantly vindicated by his being carried off by the devil after a long penitential speech."

But the most important predecessor of Mozart's work is an Italian opera produced at Venice in 1787, under the title of "Il capriccio dramatico," the music by various composers. It is in two acts, the first of which represents the troubles of a travelling company of Italian singers in Germany. Policastro, the manager, complains that he is losing money—that the public will not come and see their operas. We are introduced to the usual types of *prima donna*, and gather the impression that they are supposed to

be strolling players of a very humble class, since the tenor can boast of no greater successes than the sonnets which were written in his praise when he appeared at Legnano and Lugo.[1]

"Yes—you are all magnificent," says Policastro; "the dramas are splendid, the music is lovely—but it does not please the public." "That's the public's fault," says the *prima donna*. "Well, we've got to content them," says the manager, "and change our bill. In this place they have never yet seen that opera in one act which we acted in Provence. You all know it; we will just run through it now, and perform it this evening." The singers hesitate and look anxious. "Very well," says Policastro, "I'll have the bills posted at once." "Stop," says Ninetta, "this opera is 'Don Giovanni'?" "Yes—the 'Stone Guest.'" They shrug their shoulders. "Well, of course, you never know what German taste may like, but—" "You think it's rash?" "Very—the action is improbable, the libretto is contrary to all the regular rules. I don't know what the music is—but I'm sure we shall be going from bad to worse." "Do you think the public care about rules?" asks the manager. "They care about what pleases them, and you will make more money out of rubbish than out of well-written serious plays." Cavalier Tempesta, or as Chrysander interprets him, Baron von Sturm, the protector of the *prima donna*, comes in and tells them plainly that their new opera is *una bella e stupenda porcheria*. It is only stuff for village fairs. Policastro cites Tirso de Molina and Molière,

[1] There must have been some particular joke about Lugo, as the *prima donna* in Marcello's "Teatro alla moda" boasts of her success (and her sonnets) at the same place.

but there is a general complaint of sore throat from the singers, which is only relieved by Policastro's threat to stop paying them. They become docile at once, and the opera is rehearsed, forming the second act of the extravaganza.

The first act, it will be seen, is a very skilful device to excite the interest of the audience in what is to follow; but it shows us plainly that the subject was considered only fit for what Germans call a *Schmiere*. However, as Policastro predicted, the opera was an enormous success and travelled all over Italy, crossed the Alps to Vienna almost at once, and eventually was acted even in London. The music appears to have been principally composed by a Neapolitan, Giuseppe Gazzaniga.

The first act is the work of Giovanni Bertati, a well-known librettist of the period, who eventually wrote the libretto of Cimarosa's "Il matrimonio segreto," and there is no reason to doubt that he was the author of the second act as well. As he admits through the mouth of the impresario, his Don Juan play is founded on Tirso de Molina's and on Molierè's, although in its details it differs from both of the earlier authorities.

The action is laid in Villena, a town in Aragon. Scene I[1] opens with Pasquariello, Don Giovanni's servant, keeping watch outside the house of Donna Anna, which his master has entered. Suddenly Don Giovanni and Donna Anna come out of the house, Anna trying to unmask her assailant. She calls for help; her father, the Commendatore, enters, and she

[1] I re-number the scenes according to English usage, the word "scene" implying not the entrance or exit of a character but a change of scenery.

retires. A duel ensues, in which Don Giovanni kills the Commendatore; Don Giovanni and Pasquariello after a short dialogue leave the stage. Anna returns with Ottavio (here called Il Duca Ottavio) followed by servants, who carry the corpse into the house by Ottavio's direction. Anna relates to Ottavio how Don Giovanni entered her house and assaulted her. Ottavio attempts to console her with the prospect of marriage; she refuses to think of it, and says that she will go into a convent ("in un Ritiro voglio passar i giorni") until her father's murder is avenged. Ottavio sings an aria expressing his sorrow at finding his intended marriage postponed at the last moment.

Scene II. The country outside Villena, with rustic cottages and a noble mansion. Pasquariello reproaches Don Giovanni for his evil life. Don Giovanni explains that he has come into the country to pursue Donna Ximena. A lady gets out of a carriage; it is Donna Elvira, in search of her promised husband Don Giovanni. They meet unexpectedly, and Don Giovanni makes his escape, leaving Pasquariello to explain his character to Elvira, and show her the list of his conquests. Elvira goes out, determined to assert her rights. A scene follows between Don Giovanni and Donna Ximena, from which it is clear that he intends to desert her also. A chorus of peasants now enters to celebrate the marriage of Biagio and Maturina. Pasquariello makes advances to Maturina and excites the jealousy of Biagio. The chorus goes out and Don Giovanni enters. He at once makes love to Maturina, and drives away Biagio with blows. After a dialogue and aria, Maturina takes Don Giovanni into her own house. Donna Ximena returns, suspicious of Don Giovanni's inten-

tions. Pasquariello and his master reassure her, but the situation is complicated by the entrance of Donna Elvira, followed almost immediately by Maturina. Don Giovanni escapes in his usual adroit manner, leaving Elvira and Maturina together. Don Giovanni has told each that the other is mad, and a comic scene of mutual recrimination follows.

Scene III. A cemetery, with the equestrian monument of the Commendatore. Don Ottavio enters with a stone-mason and directs him to carve on the base of the statue an inscription which he has written out. Don Giovanni and Pasquariello enter, and the stone-mason having finished his work retires. The other two read the inscription, and Don Giovanni orders Pasquariello to invite the statue to supper. The statue nods repeatedly. Don Giovanni renews the invitation himself, and receives a verbal answer of acceptance from the statue.

Scene IV. A room in Don Giovanni's house. Lanterna, another servant, is preparing supper. Donna Elvira enters. Don Giovanni comes in and finds her. As in Molière's play she tells him that she has repented of her passion and intends to retire to a convent, after taking this last opportunity of adjuring him to reform his life. He politely asks her to stay the night; she refuses, saying that her carriage waits, and after singing an aria takes her departure. Don Giovanni then proceeds to eat his supper, waited on by Lanterna and Pasquariello, to the accompaniment of music on the stage. There is a great deal of comic business on the part of the servants. Don Giovanni and Pasquariello propose the toast of the city where they have found the most adorable ladies, the city in this case being naturally Venice, where the opera

was performed.[1] In the middle of their festivities the statue arrives, seizes Don Giovanni by the hand and bids him repent. The scene changes for a moment to Hell, where Don Giovanni is tormented by furies while singing an aria. The wings nearest the audience remain, as Pasquariello has taken refuge there. At the end of the aria Hell disappears and the room is seen as before. Lanterna, who left the stage on the arrival of the statue, returns with Maturina, Donna Elvira, Donna Ximena and Ottavio. Pasquariello relates what has happened; the others are duly shocked, and decide to cheer their spirits with singing and dancing.

The reader who is already familiar with Mozart's opera will have seen at once that Da Ponte's libretto incorporated practically the whole of Bertati's, and a comparison of the two poems in detail[2] will show that although Da Ponte entirely rewrote the play, he preserved a large number of quite unimportant details. Gazzaniga's opera was produced at the Teatro San Moisè at Venice for the carnival of 1787, which probably means that the first performance took place in January of that year, if not in the last week of the preceding year, the carnival season of operas lasting from St. Stephen's Day to Shrove Tuesday. Its success was so immediate that a rival "Don Giovanni" was at once brought out at the Teatro San Samuele for the same season. The composer of "Il nuovo convitato di pietra" was one Francesco Gardi; the

[1] In the score the word "Venezia" has been crossed out, and "Ferrara" written in, showing that the opera was performed there at a later date.

[2] Bertati's libretto is printed complete in an article by Chrysander, "Don Giovanni, Gazzaniga und Mozart," in the *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 1888.

author's name is not known. The play was modelled more directly on Tirso de Molina's "Burlador," and it has been suggested that Da Ponte was acquainted with this libretto as well as with Bertati's.[1] The opera at Vienna was always closely in touch with the Venetian theatres, and it was characteristic of Da Ponte to seize on the new libretto and propose the subject to Mozart before it had been more than a month on the stage.

Bertati's libretto, though clumsy and awkward in literary style, has the merit of a certain blunt directness, but is not constructed dramatically. The story, in fact, does not lend itself to dramatic treatment, and, as we have seen, every previous Don Juan play had been more or less of an extravaganza, with the possible exception of Molière's, which was at any rate a failure, and in that sense also an exception. In Bertati's play Don Giovanni is on the stage almost the whole time, and the tale of his wickednesses is unrolled before us rather like Leporello's catalogue. There is not a character on the stage who has any interest for us apart from his or her immediate relation to the hero. No wonder the opera pleased the general public; their sympathies, which would naturally be with Don Giovanni in any case, were kept carefully concentrated upon him. We do not care in the least what becomes of the ladies any more than he does. Donna Anna, it will be observed, disappears from the play altogether after the first scene. One reason of this is that the opera was written for a small company, and we see from a memorandum on the score[2] that the parts of Donna Anna and

[1] Taddeo Wiel, *I teatri musicali veneziani del settecento*, Venice, 1897.

[2] In the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.

Maturina were sung by the same person. The Commendatore had to sing the part of Biagio as well, and reappear at the end as the Statue; Don Ottavio and Lanterna were expected to be peasants in the chorus that celebrates the wedding of Biagio and Maturina.

Da Ponte, besides turning the whole libretto into a more elegant and witty Italian, attempted to give more dramatic interest to his story by cutting out one female part—Donna Ximena—and considerably extending the others. Gazzaniga's opera required a good Don Giovanni, and anybody could sing the rest; Da Ponte's Anna, Elvira and Zerlina become real individualities, and require first-rate actresses to do them justice.

For the first few scenes he follows Bertati closely. The opera opens, as before, with Don Giovanni's servant Leporello keeping watch outside the house of Donna Anna. Don Giovanni comes out pursued by Anna, who calls for help; her father the Commendatore appears, fights with Don Giovanni and is killed. Don Giovanni and Leporello make their escape. Donna Anna returns with Don Ottavio. Here we note a small but important divergence from Bertati. In the older opera Donna Anna retires to a convent, and Don Ottavio finds his marriage indefinitely postponed; Da Ponte's Donna Anna is more energetic, and makes Don Ottavio swear solemnly to avenge her father's murder.

The next scene shows us the unexpected meeting with Donna Elvira, Don Giovanni's hasty departure, and Leporello's exhibition of the catalogue of his love-affairs; the peasants enter with song and dance, the happy couple being here called Masetto and Zerlina.

As before, Don Giovanni makes love to Zerlina, and arouses the jealousy of Masetto. Bertati allowed his rustic bride to take Don Giovanni into her own house; Da Ponte makes Don Giovanni conduct her towards his. His designs, however, are frustrated by the sudden entrance of Donna Elvira, who takes Zerlina under her protection. From this point Da Ponte adheres less closely to his original. Don Ottavio and Donna Anna enter, and meeting Don Giovanni demand his assistance in their plan of vengeance, neither of them being aware that he is himself the object of it. Elvira returns, and openly accuses Don Giovanni of deserting her. He tells the others that she is mad, and follows her off the stage as if to protect her; but the suspicions of Anna and Ottavio have already been aroused, and Anna now realizes that Don Giovanni and her assailant of the previous night are one and the same. She relates the story in detail to Ottavio, and once more demands vengeance. Don Ottavio can hardly believe that her suspicions are correct, and says that he will take steps to discover the truth, and either avenge her or undeceive her.

A dialogue follows between Leporello and Don Giovanni. With a view to furthering the seduction of Zerlina, Leporello has made the peasants drunk, propitiated Masetto as best he could, and managed to prevent Elvira from getting in the way. Don Giovanni decides to entertain the peasants with a feast and a dance, and counts upon adding at least ten more names to his list by the next morning. The scene changes to a garden. Zerlina makes her peace with Masetto; Don Giovanni enters, Masetto hides in an arbour, in which he is discovered by Don

Giovanni, just as the latter is inviting her to come into it. Don Giovanni saves the situation by taking both of them into the house for the dance. Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio enter masked; Leporello and Don Giovanni, seeing them from a window, ask them to join the festivity.

The scene changes to Don Giovanni's ballroom, where the peasants have just finished a dance. The three masks enter, and dancing continues. A scream is heard from Zerlina; Don Ottavio and the others hasten to her assistance. Don Giovanni tries to accuse Leporello of being the offender, but the three avengers take off their masks, and Don Ottavio threatens Don Giovanni with a pistol. This is followed by an ensemble of some length, on which the curtain falls.

The second act opens with a dialogue between Don Giovanni and Leporello, who, like Sganarelle, reproves his master, but is persuaded to remain in his service by a gift of money. Don Giovanni is at present in pursuit of Donna Elvira's maid, and takes Leporello's cloak as a disguise. Elvira appears at the window, and Don Giovanni persuades her to come down. He then escapes, leaving Leporello in his master's cloak to take her out of the way so that he himself can return and serenade the maid. No sooner has he finished his song than Masetto enters with some armed peasants in search of him. Passing himself off as Leporello, he offers to help them; he then sends the peasants out in different directions, and, being left alone with Masetto, takes away his weapons and gives him a good beating. Zerlina enters, finds Masetto groaning, and consoles him.

The next scene is described as a dark courtyard in Donna Anna's house. Leporello enters with Elvira, from whom he vainly tries to escape in the darkness. Ottavio and Anna follow with lights, and Masetto and Zerlina also come in. Leporello is discovered, and reveals his identity, to the confusion of all present. After he has escaped, Don Ottavio announces that he has now come definitely to the conclusion that there can be no doubt that the murderer of the Commendatore was Don Giovanni. He requests the others to stay and console Donna Anna, while he himself goes, not to fight with Don Giovanni, but to fetch the police.

With the next scene Da Ponte returns to Bertati's libretto, but with modifications. Don Giovanni and Leporello have taken refuge in a cemetery, and Leporello relates the adventure with Elvira. Don Giovanni laughs, and is startled by the voice of the Statue warning him of his approaching end. It is only then that Don Giovanni discovers the monument of the Commendatore with its inscription. As in Bertati, he directs Leporello to invite the Statue to supper, and repeats the invitation himself.

After this there is inserted a short scene for Ottavio and Anna. Ottavio wishes to be married the next day; Anna protests that although she loves him, the world would not approve. The scene changes to a room in Don Giovanni's house. Here as before we are shown the supper, the music on the stage, and Donna Elvira's last attempt to induce Don Giovanni to repent, followed by the entrance of the Statue, and Don Giovanni's descent into Hell. In the last scene the other characters enter with the police, and Leporello gives his account of Don

Giovanni's end. The survivors, being unable to proceed further with the case for want of a defendant, make the usual operatic arrangements for their own futures, and three lines of moral sentiments, sung by the whole company, conclude the opera.

Those who have seen Mozart's opera performed may remember the story somewhat differently. But I have described it exactly as it stands in the original libretto, produced at Prague, and have purposely disregarded the alterations made for the performance at Vienna, as well as those of a later date, which are not even Mozart's.

Da Ponte's libretto is very skilfully put together, and there are certain scenes which are admirably effective on the stage. Gounod described the introduction as "la plus belle exposition de drame lyrique que je connaisse"; though if we accept this judgment, we must give the credit to Bertati. Another very well-designed scene is that in which Don Giovanni is confronted with Donna Anna and Donna Elvira simultaneously; he thinks that he has escaped ingeniously from his difficulties, whereas it is this very escape that convinces Anna and Ottavio of his guilt. But in spite of the ingenuity with which the essentially undramatic character of the story is disguised, the libretto, taken as a whole, is not altogether satisfactory. Da Ponte's idea seems to have been to unite all the other characters, and especially Ottavio, Anna and Elvira, in league against Don Giovanni and Leporello, and to make them pursue that pair of evildoers from beginning to end. The *crescendo* is in some ways very well managed; first, we find Anna alone, then Ottavio joins her, later Elvira, Masetto, Zerlina, and the climax comes when the

Statue appears on the scene. There is also a gradual progress from Anna's initial uncertainty of Don Giovanni's identity, and Elvira's ignorance of his character, up to the end, the Statue again bringing the climax by the force of his supernatural knowledge of the whole story. The drawback is that those who are on the side of the angels are for the most part weak and unsympathetic characters. Ottavio is a nonentity, Anna hard enough to be unpleasant, but not hard enough to be mistress of the situation. Masetto and Zerlina are merely "comic relief." The most interesting character is Elvira, because the most human. Being human she is inconsistent: in the first act she is bent merely on vengeance, while in the second act she has fallen in love with Don Giovanni afresh, and finally deserts him for a convent. Donna Anna has always been regarded as the real heroine of the opera, mainly, I suppose, because no doubts have ever been cast upon her reputation, except by E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose interpretation must be considered later on. But whereas Donna Elvira begins to show a new side of her character in the second act, it is clear that Da Ponte was in some difficulty to sustain our interest in Anna and Ottavio. They come in in that strange scene of confusion which takes place in the court-yard of Anna's house, but they contribute nothing to the action; and the scene between Anna and Ottavio that follows the cemetery scene seems to have been put in merely to give Anna the chance of singing another important aria. None of these virtuous and semi-virtuous characters, except the Commendatore, are ever able to stand up to Don Giovanni; consequently it is impossible not to regard

him as a fascinating hero, unless we take a severely puritan view of the whole opera, in which case we shall find ourselves obliged to agree with M. l'Abbé Terrasson and Mr. David Erskine Baker, and consider it altogether too abominable to be represented on the stage at all.

CHAPTER IX

"DON GIOVANNI"—II

BETWEEN the first performances of "Figaro" at Vienna and "Don Giovanni" at Prague little more than a year elapsed; but it was an important year for Mozart, both as regards his compositions and his personal relations. As he himself kept a catalogue of his works at this time, in which the dates were all carefully entered, his progress as a composer can be followed very exactly. The first few compositions are mostly chamber music—the pianoforte quartet in E flat, the trio in G, the sonata or pianoforte duet in F, the clarinet trio, and a string quartet in D, all produced before the end of August 1786. These and other chamber works of this year were probably written for amateurs—the clarinet trio, for instance, was written for the sister of Gottfried von Jacquin—but they often show a seriousness of purpose and a depth of poetry that classes them among their composer's best works. This is very noticeable in the minuet of the clarinet trio, although one does not generally expect the minuet to be the most serious movement of a sonata. In December we come upon the noble pianoforte concerto in C major, the "Prague" symphony in D, and the touching aria for Nancy Storace, "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" in which the pianoforte *obbligato*, played by Mozart himself, was skilfully treated as if it were a second character joining with the first in a duet.

At Prague, as we have seen, there was not much work done. Returning to Vienna in February, Mozart was soon to lose three of those dearest to him within a few months of each other—first, Count August Hatzfeld, then his father, and lastly Siegmund Barisani, the son of the court physician at Salzburg, who had himself followed the same profession and had been Mozart's medical attendant as well as his closest friend. How deeply he felt the loss of Hatzfeld may be seen from the fact that it was his death that inspired that well-known letter which he wrote to his father on April 4, in which he speaks of death from the Masonic point of view.[1] Hatzfeld was a remarkably good violinist, and it was for him that Mozart had composed the rondo with violin *obbligato* inserted into "Idomeneo" on the occasion of its performance by amateurs at Vienna in March 1786. He had often played in Mozart's quartets, and had become so intimately acquainted with their style, that Mozart is said to have preferred his interpretation of them to all others. It therefore seems possible that the two great string quintets, composed in April and May of this year, may have been to some extent connected with his death in their composer's mind. We must however beware of jumping to such conclusions as a matter of course, since we can hardly suppose that the death of Leopold Mozart on May 28 was the direct inspiration of the "Musical Joke" which is dated June 14.

Other works of this period are the Sonata in C for pianoforte duet, the beautiful song "Abendempfindung," the "Kleine Nachtmusik," and the violin sonata in A (K.V. 526). To say that all the composi-

[1] This letter will be considered more fully in a later chapter.

tions of this date are of a tragic or even serious character is manifestly untrue; but there are certainly cases, notably the G minor quintet, and the song "Abendempfindung," in which we may recall M. D'Indy's criticism on the "second period" of Beethoven—"jusqu'alors il n'a écrit que de la musique, maintenant il écrit de la vie." We must take into consideration also the peculiar circumstances under which the new opera was being composed. "Figaro" had been planned with a view to attracting attention; Italian comic opera was fashionable in Vienna, and Mozart was determined to show that he could write a better Italian opera than the Italians themselves. "Don Giovanni" was written for a different audience. I do not know what authority there is for a statement ascribed to Mozart that "Don Giovanni" was written a little for Prague, not at all for Vienna, and most of all for himself, but it is evident that the story is no unreasonable representation of the composer's attitude. Vienna had crowded to "Figaro" for a few nights, and had probably regarded it rather as a *succès de scandale;* Prague had shown that it had a real understanding and enthusiasm for Mozart's music. Mozart may very probably have felt that whatever he wrote, Prague was sure to accept, and that in that case he need have no fear of letting his imagination have the fullest liberty. Da Ponte says that Mozart wished to treat the subject seriously; but we must not suppose Da Ponte to have meant that Mozart wished to treat the libretto as high tragedy with an earnest moral purpose. What he meant was that Mozart treated the music too much in the manner of *opera seria*—that there were too many

arias on a grand scale, and too much study of harmony and orchestration instead of attractive tunes that people could easily remember. "Don Giovanni" was described by both Da Ponte and Mozart as a *dramma giocoso;* the modern tendency is to interpret it as a tragedy. Some critics have even classed it as a "romantic opera." But it must be clearly understood that musical romanticism such as we find in the early nineteenth century was utterly foreign to the spirit of Mozart's day. It is only the nineteenth century that felt itself obliged to explain the character of Don Juan; the seventeenth and eighteenth accepted him as a fact. Different authors dressed him in different costumes, but none thought it necessary to investigate why he wore them. What then was the fascination of the subject? why did Molière, Shadwell, Goldoni and the rest all protest that it was absurd and yet turn it into a play? Obviously because the exhibition of profligacy was attractive to any audience, and the final catastrophe combined the two advantages of satisfying the moralists and providing the ordinary spectator with a sensational effect. From Mozart's point of view "Don Giovanni" is in so far a romantic opera that it deliberately employs the unreal; but its retention of the comic element and its general absence of conscious formality prevent it from ever approaching the heroic style such as we see exemplified in "Idomeneo" or "La clemenza di Tito."

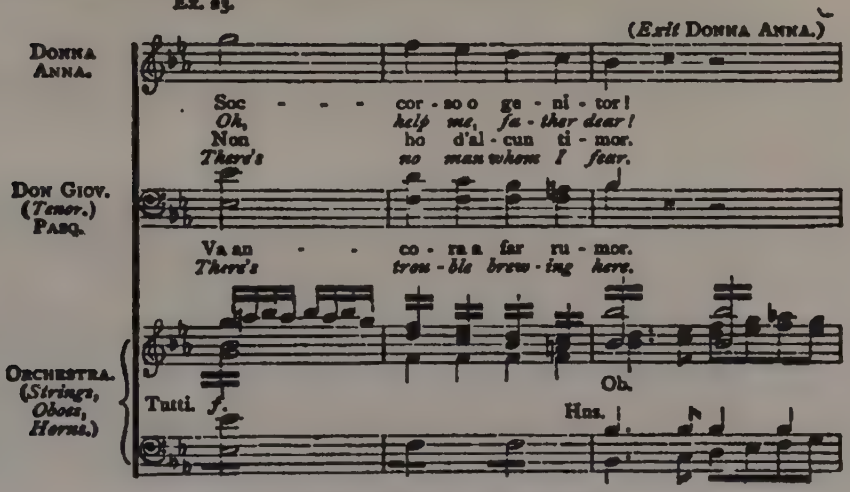
There are therefore three factors which contribute to make "Don Giovanni" an opera of a very unusual type. The first is that the composer allowed himself a free hand to try experiments in expression and to push every technical device to its furthest limits; the

second is that owing to external circumstances he happened at that particular time to be in a mental condition favourable to a certain emotional expansiveness; the third is that the libretto dealt with a subject utterly incapable of regular and formal treatment, and therefore attempted to produce the illusion of regularity by the employment of disconnected conventionalities which are often a mere hindrance to the progress of the story. Putting these three things together, we are led to expect a work containing moments of overwhelming beauty and the greatest dramatic power, along with curiously incongruous lapses into the mannerisms of an old-fashioned style, the whole being to some extent disfigured by a general vagueness and confusion of plan.

Concerning Da Ponte's indebtedness to Bertati, there can be no doubt whatever. Mozart's relation to Gazzaniga is less clear; it seems probable that he was acquainted with the earlier setting, but he certainly did not adopt the composer's ideas in the way, for instance, that he imitated Gluck in "Idomeneo," or even to the extent that he imitated Sarti in "Figaro." Giuseppe Gazzaniga (1748–1819), a native of Verona, but educated at Naples, was a fairly voluminous composer, but left no great mark on the music of his day. His "Don Giovanni," although far inferior, of course, to Mozart's, is nevertheless extremely interesting, and it is curious to see how genuinely dramatic he can be with very limited resources, in spite of the fact that his opera required a whole act of apology to precede it. The best example to quote here is, of course, the introduction, since it is in the introduction that Bertati's libretto and Da Ponte's are most alike. The first part of the

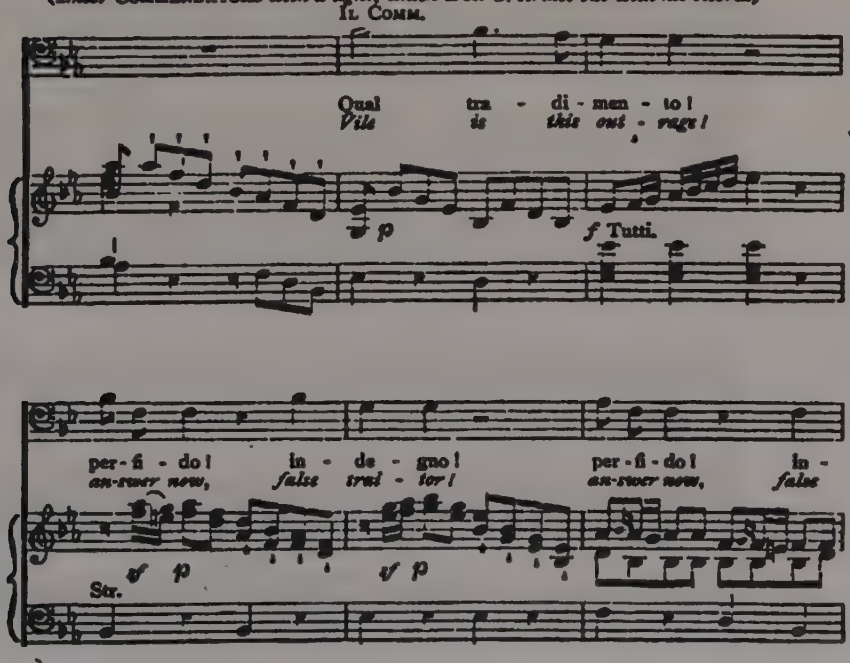
introduction as far as the entrance of the Commendatore is printed by Jahn in an Appendix: the following extract begins at that point and goes down to the death of the Commendatore.

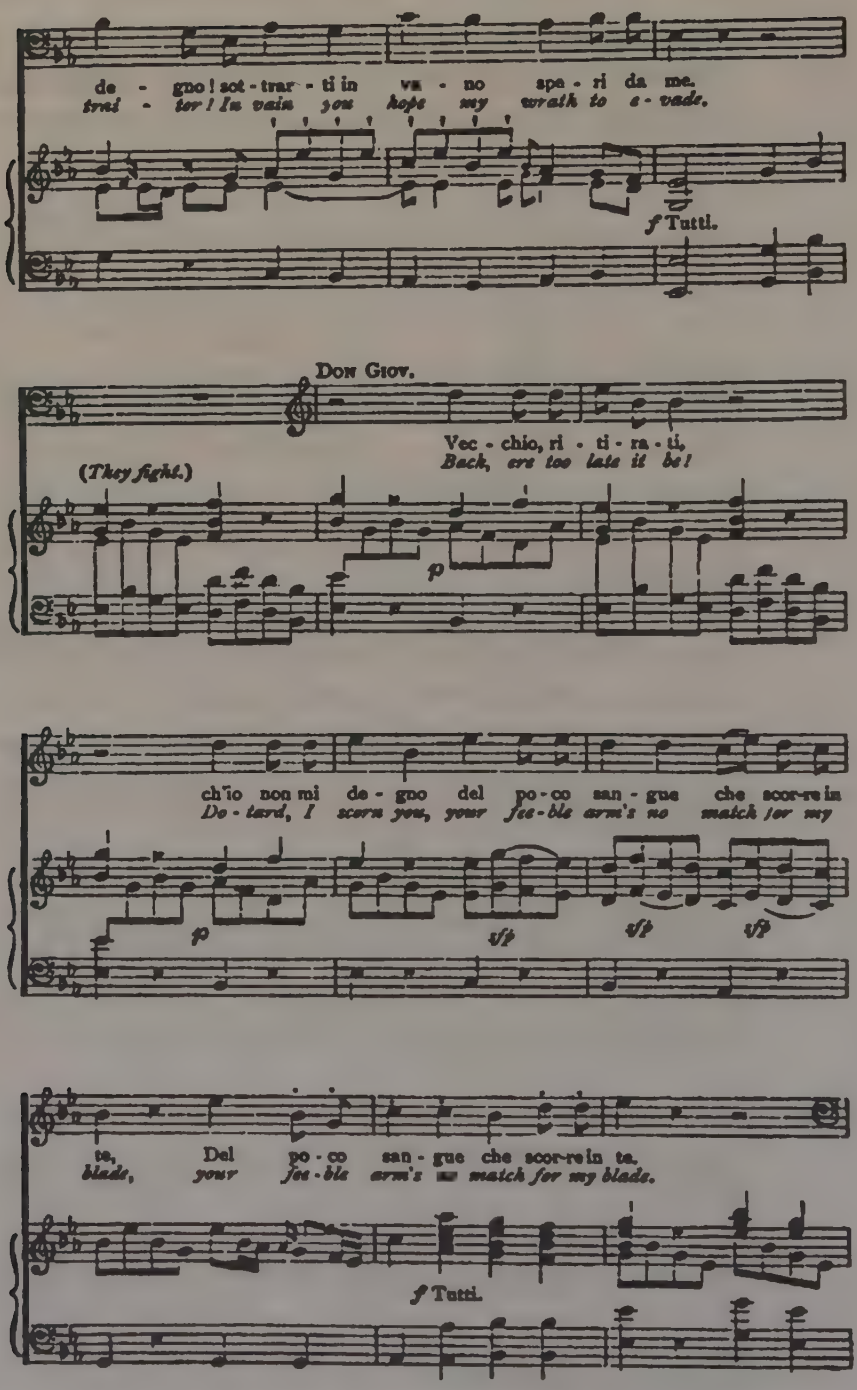
Ex. 23.

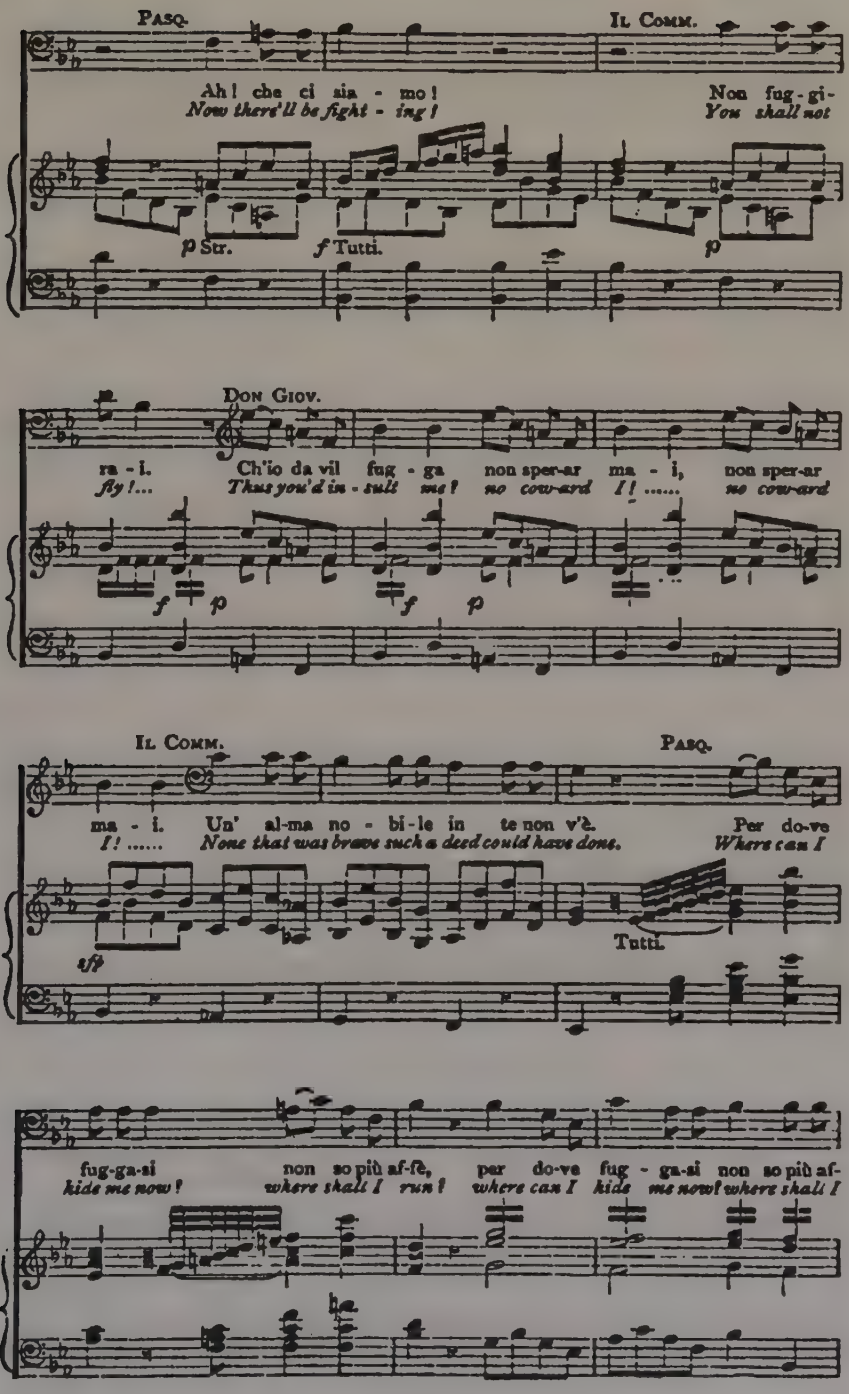

(Exit Donna Anna.)
Donna Anna.
Soc - - - cor - so o ge - ni - tor!
Oh, help me, fa - ther dear!
Non ho d'al - cun ti - mor.
There's no man whom I fear.
Don Giov. (Tenor.) Pasq.
Va an - - co - ra a far ru - mor.
There's trou - ble brew - ing here.
Orchestra. (Strings, Oboes, Horns.)
Tutti. f.
Ob.
Hns.

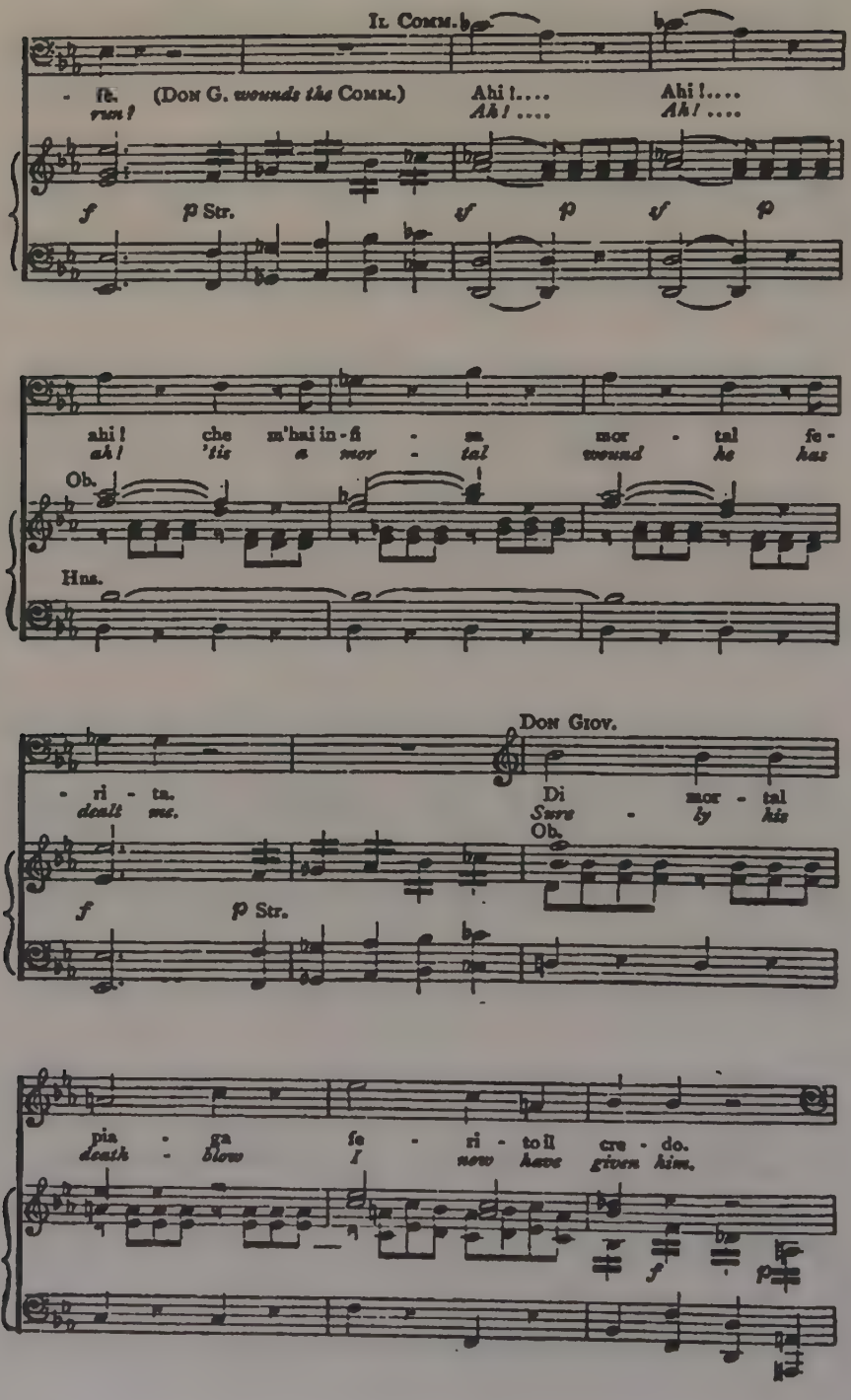
Note.—The stage directions are in the original.

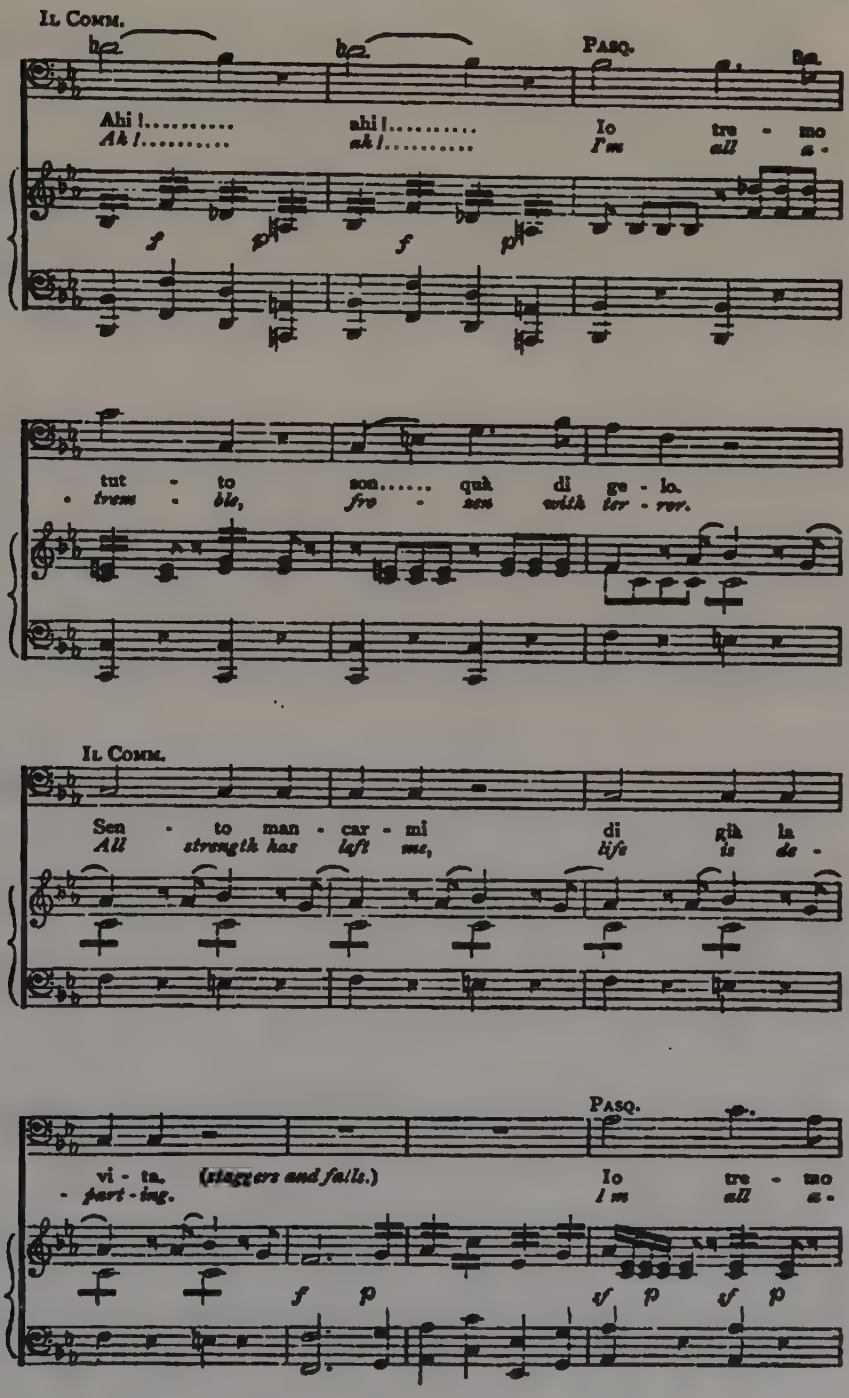
(*Enter* Commendatore *with a light, which* Don G. *strikes out with his sword.*)

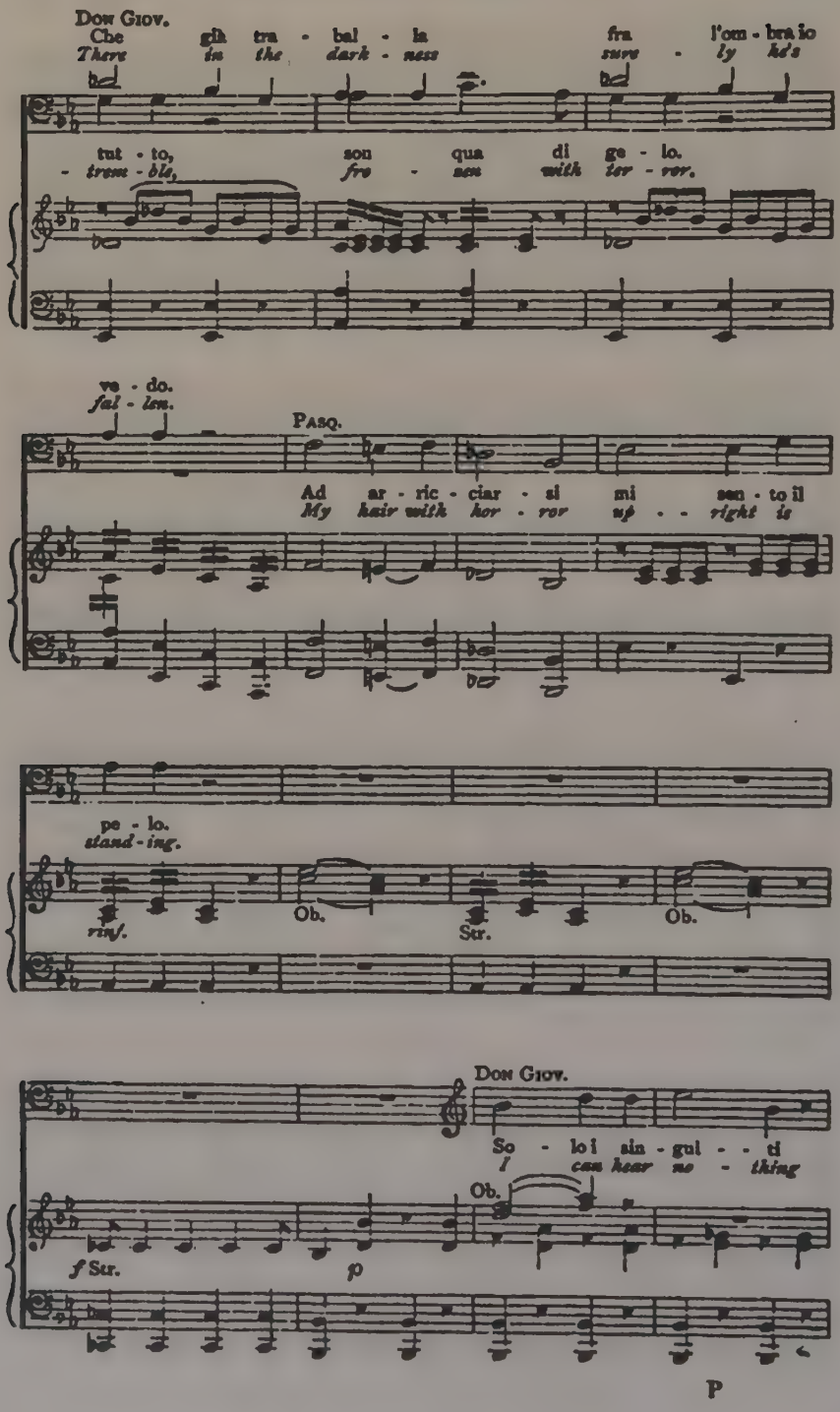

Il Comm.
Qual tra - di - men - to!
Vile is this out - rage!
p
f Tutti.
per - fi - do! in - de - gno! per - fi - do! in -
an-swer now, false trai - tor! an-swer now, false
sf p sf p
Str.

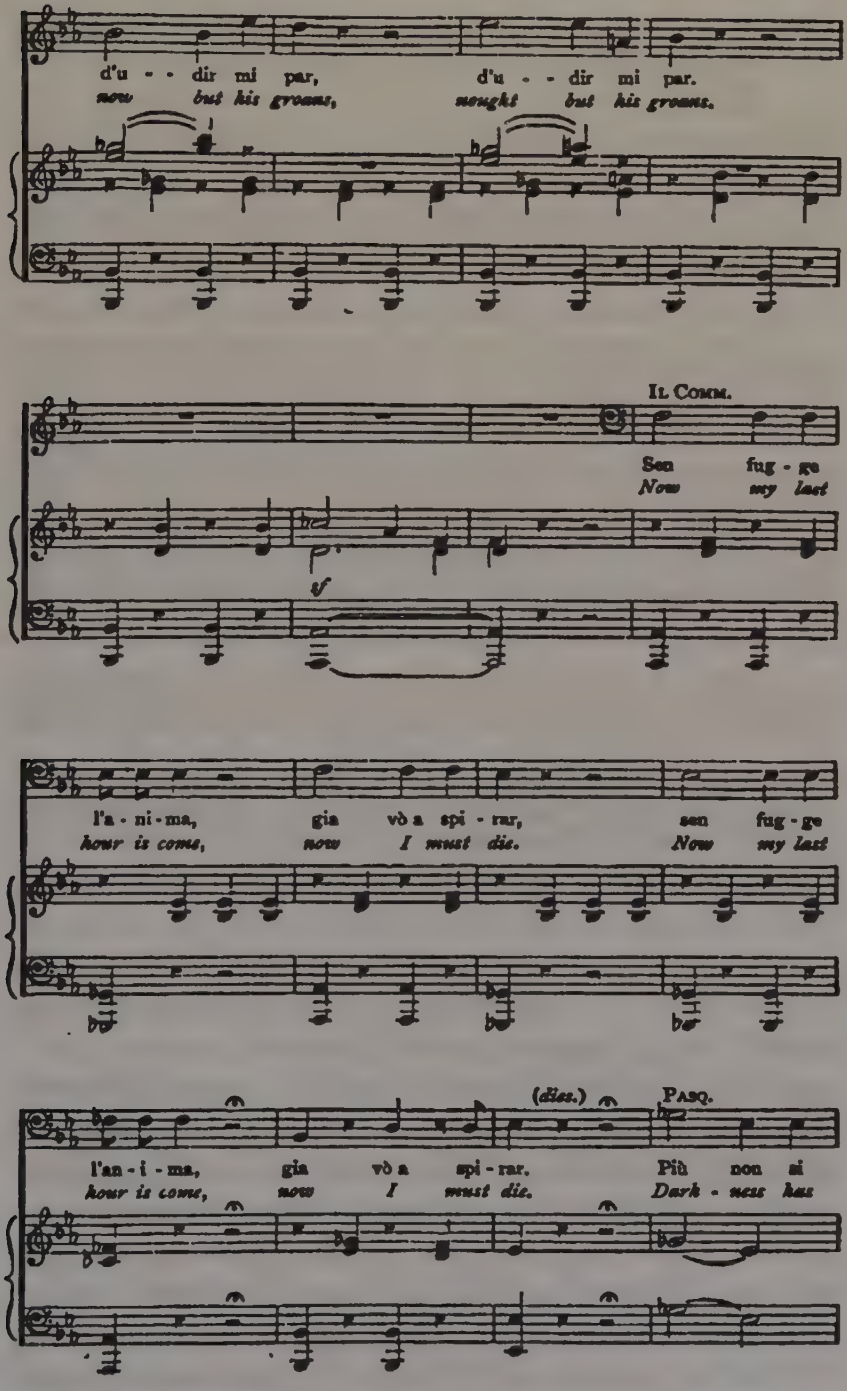

de - gno! sot - trar - ti in va - no spe - ri da me.
trai - tor! In vain you hope my wrath to e - vade.
f Tutti.
Don Giov.
Vec - chio, ri - ti - ra - ti,
Back, ere too late it be!
(They fight.)
p
ch'io non mi de - gno del po - co san - gue che scor-re in
De - tard, I scorn you, your fee - ble arm's no match for my
p
sf
sf
sf
te, Del po - co san - gue che scor-re in te.
blade, your fee - ble arm's no match for my blade.
f Tutti.

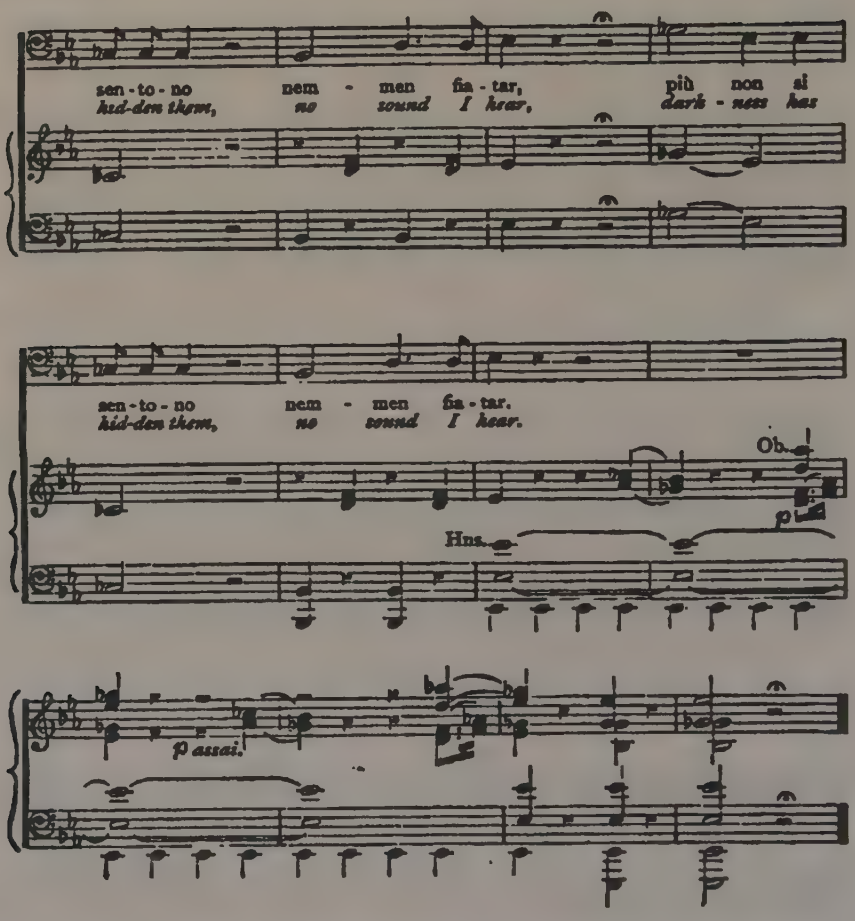

Pasq.
Il Comm.
Ah! che ci sia - mo!
Now there'll be fight - ing!
Non fug-gi-
You shall not
p Str.
f Tutti.
p
Don Giov.
ra - i.
fly!...
Ch'io da vil fug - ga non sper-ar ma - i, non sper-ar
Thus you'd in - sult me! no cow-ard I! ..... no cow-ard
f
p
f
p
Il Comm.
Pasq.
ma - i.
I! .....
Un' al-ma no - bi-le in te non v'è.
None that was brave such a deed could have done.
Per do-ve
Where can I
Tutti.
sfp
fug-ga-si
kide me now!
non so più af-fe,
where shall I run!
per do-ve fug - ga-si non so più af-
where can I kide me now! where shall I


IL COMM.
- ti. (DON G. wounds the COMM.) Ahi!.... Ahi!....
ren! Ah! .... Ah! ....
f p Str. sf p sf p
ahi! che m'hai in-fi - m mor - tal fe-
ah! 'tis a mor - tal wound he has
Ob.
Hns.
DON GIOV.
- ri - ta. Di mor - tal
dealt me. Sure - ly his
Ob.
f p Str.
pia - ga fe - ri - to il cre - do.
death - blow I now have given him.
f p


IL COMM.
PASQ.
Ahi!..... ahi!..... Io tre - mo
Ah!..... ah!..... I'm all a-
f f
tut - to son..... quà di ge - lo.
trem - ble, fro - zen with ter - ror.
IL COMM.
Sen - to man - car - mi di già la
All strength has left me, life is de -
PASQ.
vi - ta. (staggers and falls.) Io tre - mo
- part - ing. I'm all a-
f p sf p sf p


Don Giov.
Che gli tra - bal - la fra l'om - bra io
There in the dark - ness sure - ly he's
tut - to, son qua di ge - lo.
trem - ble, fro - zen with ter - ror.
ve - do.
fal - len.
Pasq.
Ad ar - ric - ciar - si mi sen - to il
My hair with hor - ror up - right is
pe - lo.
stand - ing.
rinf.
Ob.
Str.
Ob.
Don Giov.
So - lo i sin - gul - - ti
I can hear no - thing
Ob.
f Str.
p
P


d'u - - dir mi par, d'u - - dir mi par.
now but his groans, nought but his groans.
IL COMM.
Sen fug - ge
Now my last
sf
l'a - ni - ma, già vò a spi - rar, sen fug - ge
hour is come, now I must die. Now my last
(dies.)
PASQ.
l'an - i - ma, già vò a spi - rar. Più non si
hour is come, now I must die. Dark - ness has


sen - to - no nem - men fia - tar, più non si
hid-den them, no sound I hear, dark - ness has
sen - to - no nem - men fia - tar.
hid-den them, no sound I hear.
Ob.
p
Hns.
p assai.

If we judge Gazzaniga's treatment of the scene by the standard of the average Italian opera style of the period, we notice a very strong dramatic sense, and a considerable power of sustaining the musical interest through a long continuous scene. The orchestra employed is small, and the treatment of the instruments is old-fashioned and ineffective as far as sonority is concerned. As usual, the violas play with the bass, and the violins are often in unison, the whole effect depending on the use of the harpsichord to fill up the middle harmonies. But there is a continual attempt

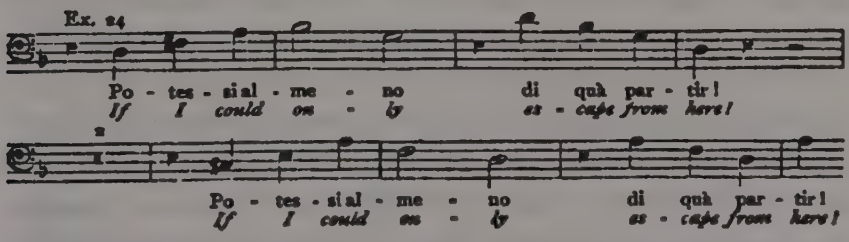
to make the instruments expressive of some emotional idea: when the Commendatore is wounded, the oboes take up the theme of his groans, and later, after he is too weak to groan, their thin voices repeat the theme and suggest the sufferings that he can no longer express audibly. Another expressive phrase appears in the violins just before he speaks for the last time; and the composer seems originally to have thought of a very striking entry of the horns (holding E flat in octaves) on his last note of all. I have however not printed it, because it has been struck out in the score, whether by the composer's authority or not it is impossible to say. The same notes were repeated, and again struck out, four bars later (at the end of Leporello's first sentence); probably whoever made the alteration thought, with some reason, that the two previous entries would spoil the effect of the long holding notes six bars before the end. It was none the less a pity to sacrifice the first entry at the moment when the Commendatore dies; the effect has a certain resemblance to the use of the horns in Beethoven's music to "Egmont," when Clärchen leaves the stage to commit suicide, and the story is told only by the symbolism of the music in the orchestra and the flickering lamp on the table.

If, however, we place Gazzaniga's music by the side of Mozart's, we shall see the older composer in a very different light. Gazzaniga's music is essentially dramatic; it is also musically reasonable—there are no places where the succession of harmonies does not make sense. But from beginning to end of the extract which I have printed (and the same may be said of the earlier part of the scene, printed by Jahn) there is not a single musical theme of any real signi-

ficance. Every figure, be it in the accompaniment or in the voice parts, is a stock pattern, a dummy, possessing neither life nor originality. The music bears the same sort of relation to Mozart's that a rehearsal, at which the actors walk through their parts in daylight on an empty stage wearing their ordinary clothes, speaking in their ordinary voices, does to a finished dramatic performance. Moreover, not only are Gazzaniga's themes insignificant in themselves, but the music moves slowly. The characters in the dialogue enter at regular distances; each speaks at the same pace, in much the same rhythms, and if we were witnessing a play instead of an opera, we should say that they were very slow at taking up their cues. Mozart, on the contrary, starts with themes that mean something, although in this particular scene even he employs "stock patterns" to some extent. But he does at any rate develop them, and by making his voices enter close upon each other's heels, he obtains an effect of overwhelming energy, which almost disguises the regularity of the construction.

Vigorous and energetic as is this introduction of Mozart's, there is no note of tragedy in it; it is planned simply from the standpoint of *opera buffa*. This is a difficult thing for a modern audience to realize, because *opera buffa* is a form of art which is no longer familiar, whereas there is a general impression that "Don Giovanni" is the one opera of the eighteenth century which is consistent with modern ideals. If we want to appreciate the essential difference of style between "Don Giovanni" and *opera seria*, we must constantly call to mind the music of "Idomeneo," or, failing that, the operas

of Gluck. Could anyone imagine Leporello's chattering repeated quavers appearing in the background of a dialogue between Armida and Rinaldo? Leporello has always been instanced as a wonderful example of Mozart's power of character-drawing; but in reality Leporello is as little individualized as Bartolo or any other *buffo* part. Mozart had already shown in "Figaro" that characterization was best obtained in a much more subtle and essentially musical way than by merely giving each personage a distinct rhythm in an ensemble. Leporello's individuality, such as it is, is exhibited in the aria with which the opera opens; then when Don Giovanni and Donna Anna hold the scene, he sinks into the background, and his rapidly reiterated notes, so far from expressing fear, as has been suggested, merely serve to remind us of his presence, and give a touch of the grotesque, as they do throughout the opera. Let those who think the quaver figure represents fear sing through Leporello's part by itself, without the others, and judge of the effect. Leporello's fright does not become evident until just before the duel begins, that is, at the moment when his own life is obviously in danger:—


Ex. 24
Po - tes - si al - me - no di quà par - tir!
If I could on - ly es - cape from here!
Po - tes - si al - me - no di quà par - tir!
If I could on - ly es - cape from here!

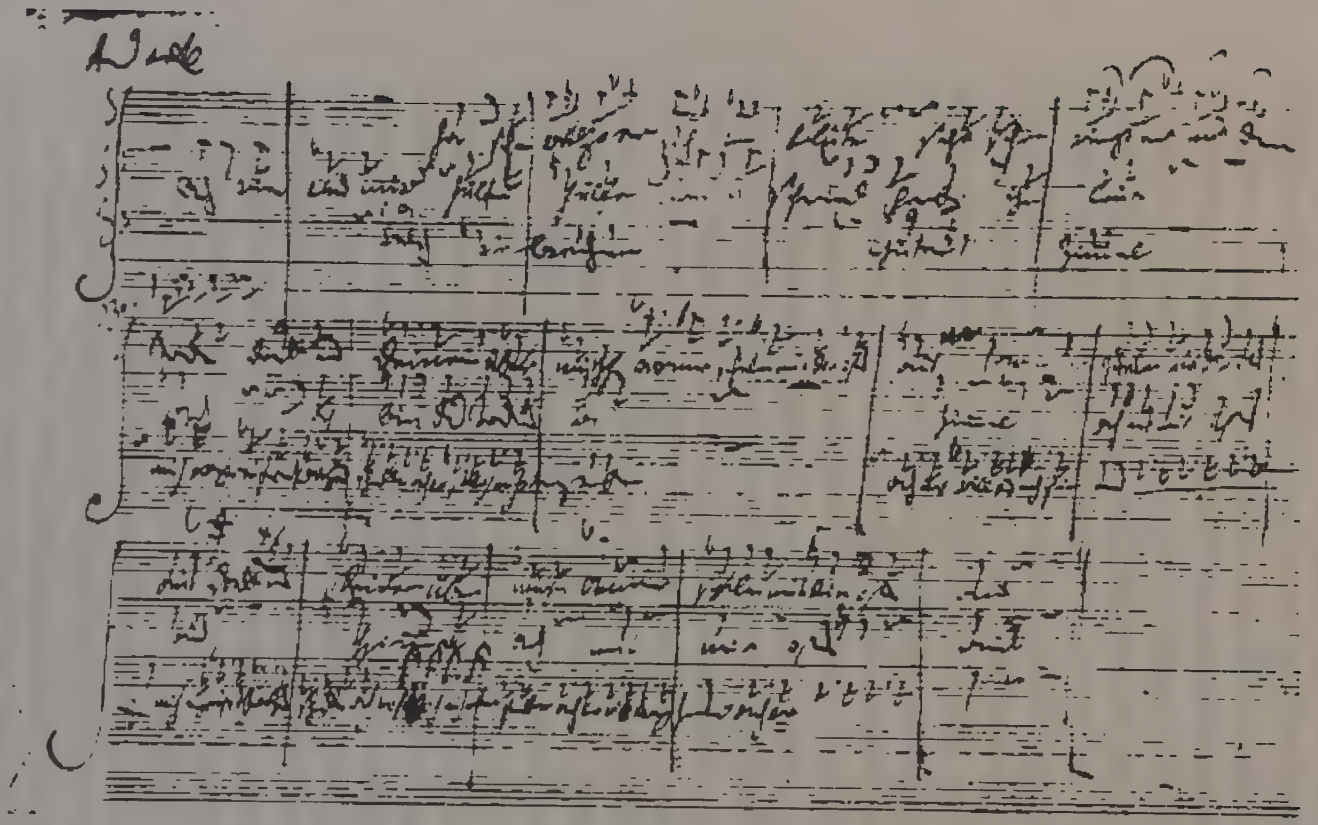
The theme, it will be noticed, has a close resemblance to certain phrases in the aria "Ah! pietà, signori miei," which he sings after the great sextet in the

second act. Moreover, Mozart shows us here that the theme is important by making the orchestra play it in unison, so that it stands out against the dialogue of the Commendatore and Don Giovanni. We may note too, along with this, the theme which accompanies Don Giovanni's first words to his adversary, a theme which is suggested later on when the Statue speaks to Don Giovanni in the cemetery. Another significant use of a previous theme appears in the terzetto after the duel; Don Giovanni, speaking of the dying Commendatore, uses the same melodic phrase that Donna Anna hurls at Don Giovanni when she refuses to let him go. It would be a mistake to label such themes as examples of *leitmotiv*, but if we have accustomed ourselves to observing this procedure in modern music, we shall find that it is equally worth while keeping our ears open for it in Mozart.

It is interesting to compare the way in which the two composers have treated the death of the Commendatore. Gazzaniga views it as part of the whole scene; the general pace of the movement does not change when the Commendatore falls. Moreover, he insists very strongly, it seems, on the darkness in which the stage is enveloped. Not that there is any attempt to paint the actual darkness in the music; but we are expressly told in the libretto that Don Giovanni puts out the Commendatore's light with his sword as soon as he comes on, and the fight takes place without either combatant being able to see the other very clearly, while Leporello is unable to see either of them. Hence his terror, and also the opening words of the recitative which follows, when Don Giovanni tries to find him again. Da Ponte has imitated this last feature closely in his version, but

Mozart, by drawing all three voices together into a terzetto as the Commendatore expires, in the desire to emphasize the emotional value of the moment with an ensemble, has thus been obliged to sacrifice something of the dramatic effect, since one inevitably gets the impression that the three characters must be in physical proximity to one another. The succeeding dialogue is therefore apt to sound more than usually absurd; but it may be contended that its very absurdity makes an effective contrast to the preceding movement, and reminds us that we are listening to an *opera buffa*. The terzetto is one of those curious movements that are so characteristic of this opera, in which Mozart seems to have forgotten everything for the moment in a complete self-absorption into his musical idea. These strange glimpses of a quite different world of musical thought invariably occur in connection with the Commendatore and his death; and remembering the events of Mozart's life during the period immediately preceding the production of the opera, one is easily tempted to suppose that the recollection of his own recent bereavements, evoked by these scenes in the drama, induced in the composer an abnormal condition of nervous excitement. If this interpretation be considered too sentimental, there is at any rate an interesting commentary on this terzetto in Beethoven's pianoforte sonata in C sharp minor, the conscious derivation of which from this source is indicated pretty clearly by the existence of a leaf on which Beethoven has hastily scribbled down the voice parts of this terzetto, without any accompaniment except the first bar of the triplet figure in the violins.

Da Ponte evidently planned Don Ottavio and



MEMORANDUM OF THE TERZETTO IN ACT I OF "DON GIOVANNI" (DEATH OF THE COMMENDATORE), IN THE HANDWRITING OF BEETHOVEN. (Note the indication of the triplet accompaniment in line 4, bar 1.)

Donna Anna as the customary pair of more or less serious lovers in a comic opera. "Figaro" had none, but then "Figaro" conforms as little to a conventional type as "Don Giovanni," in spite of the undoubted influence of that same conventional type in the original play. Mozart's early opera "La finta giardiniera" provides a good example in the characters of the Contino and Sandrina. Even as far back as 1775 Mozart had a tendency to lay his colours on more thickly than was always appropriate to the style,[1] and we see in the earlier opera something of the same violence of expression that marks this first duet between Donna Anna and Don Ottavio. Here the powerful recitative makes a startling contrast with the almost conventional style of the introduction. Although the situation is not quite the same as in "La finta giardiniera," where the two lovers are represented literally as raving lunatics throughout a great part of the opera, yet it is clear that Mozart has intended to depict Donna Anna as not quite in her right mind. There is too a decided gain, both dramatically and musically, in the fact that Don Ottavio, unlike the Contino, is perfectly self-possessed, and bearing in mind the lesson Mozart has taught us in the duets of "Figaro," it is most interesting to note how the same principle has been carried out here with a much wider emotional range; Anna's ravings and Ottavio's consolations are expressed with complete truth, almost with exaggeration, yet the music flows on continuously, and the sense of form—that is, of structure, not of formality—is maintained

[1] It must be remembered that there is reason to suppose that portions of "La finta giardiniera" were added or rewritten much later. See Chapter II.

throughout the whole movement, in spite of its being much broken up with recitatives.

With the return of Don Giovanni and Leporello we revert to *opera buffa* again. Here we come upon a new type of aria; Donna Elvira on her entrance gives vent to a soliloquy, and the two men, standing in the background, unable to see her face, make their brief comments in what would normally be the *ritornelli* of the orchestra. The idea is ingenious, and makes an admirable stage picture; the curious point is that as far as characterization is concerned, we seem to learn more about Don Giovanni and Leporello from their few short comments than we do about Elvira in the whole aria. "Don Giovanni" and "Figaro" offer us in this respect a most interesting comparison and contrast, for although the proportion of arias to ensembles is exactly the same in both operas,[1] there is none the less a perceptible difference; in "Figaro" it is the ensembles (duets, trios, &c.) that give character to the opera, in "Don Giovanni" the arias.[2] It results perhaps from the fact that Da Ponte, remembering Bertati's libretto too well, has made Don Giovanni himself the only character whose personality is best presented in ensembles, that is, in his direct influence upon other characters. He is the central figure, and there is no character who does not come into musical contact with him, whereas none of the others can be said to have so wide a range of acquaintance. Their chief interest is their relation to the hero, not their relations to each other, and this is

[1] The numbers are reckoned for the original version of "Don Giovanni," as performed at Prague.

[2] This is still more the case in that version of "Don Giovanni" which is usually performed nowadays, as it includes two additional arias.

true even of the three couples Ottavio-Anna, Masetto-Zerlina, and (we may add) Leporello-Elvira.

Elvira is by far the most interesting of the characters, after Don Giovanni himself. It has always been the custom to relegate the part to an inferior actress, whereas the apparent inconsistency of the character is itself a reason for giving it to some one who can realize and interpret its underlying unity. Anna is essentially a personage who requires solos for her presentation; she treats even Don Ottavio in so distant a manner that we cannot expect her to reveal her real self in a duet or trio with anybody less intimately acquainted with her. I suspect that if she had not been brought up from childhood always to conceal her real feelings, and never to acknowledge to herself any motive but duty and family pride, she might have been much the same sort of person as Fiordiligi in "Così fan tutte," and there seems every probability that she will eventually become first lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Night. Elvira, on the other hand, is always giving way to her emotions. She is, as we know from Molière, an escaped nun; Don Giovanni is therefore probably the first man in whom she has ever taken an interest, and whether she is in love with him or in a rage with him, he is always uppermost in her thoughts. In the opera, therefore, she must always be in the middle of the intrigue; and although she has so many conflicting emotions that she is always obliged to express them in arias, her position in the thick of the plot inevitably has forced the composer to treat her musically in a less isolated style than Donna Anna. Donna Anna thus becomes almost a tragic figure, although there is nothing tragic about her, by reason of her

aloofness, which permitted Mozart to consider her as a person apart from the rest, and intensify her portrait to a disproportionate extent; Donna Elvira, who, if we give her a moment's serious consideration, is as tragic a personality as Gluck's Armide or Verdi's Amelia, is forced by the exigencies of that very character which the poet has given her, to conform to the general *opera buffa* standard which is set by Don Giovanni, and which, as I have already pointed out, is an absolute necessity, since a really serious treatment of the whole story would have been too utterly repulsive for stage representation.[1] This seems to be the reason why Donna Elvira is generally treated as being of second-rate importance.

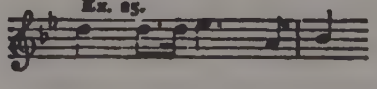
It is only by accepting a generally frivolous standpoint to the whole opera that we can tolerate the dialogue between her and Don Giovanni, or the scene with Leporello that follows, culminating in the famous "catalogue-aria." The atmosphere of frivolity is kept up for several scenes, notably, of course, in the famous duet "Là ci darem la mano." In this number, as in the duets of "Figaro," there is a wonderfully delicate sense of characterization shown in the different ways in which the tune is divided between the two voices, and in those tiny variations of melody which make so enormous a difference to the poetic significance of the phrases.

Elvira's air which follows is often omitted. Its style is so obviously Handelian, both in its melody and in its accompaniment for strings only, that Jahn considered it to have been intended as the musical

[1] I do not wish to defend the moral aspect of this position, but merely to state it; for a discussion of the modern problems involved the reader may be referred to the "Epistle dedicatory" which precedes Mr. Shaw's "Man and Superman."

equivalent of a sermon. There can be no doubt that Mozart intended it as a deliberate imitation of the old style, but it was possibly with the idea of making Elvira to some extent ridiculous in posing as a lady-abbess. It is certainly a pity to leave it out, for whether it is an imitation or burlesque of Handel, it is a fine piece of music, and has its peculiar dramatic value. The next scene does great credit to Da Ponte's powers of invention. No more delightfully humorous situation could have been imagined than for Don Ottavio and Donna Anna to invite the co-operation of Don Giovanni in their plan of vengeance on the murderer of the Commendatore. The very promptness with which Elvira reappears gives her entrance a certain comicality, and the quartet "Non ti fidar, o misera," still maintains the *buffo* style, in spite of the momentary seriousness of Anna and Ottavio. This again is a movement which has often been regarded as tragic in the extreme; but I must refer the reader once more to "Idomeneo" and particularly to the quartet in Act III of that opera for a standard of style in musical tragedy. Most ingenious is the use of the little phrase

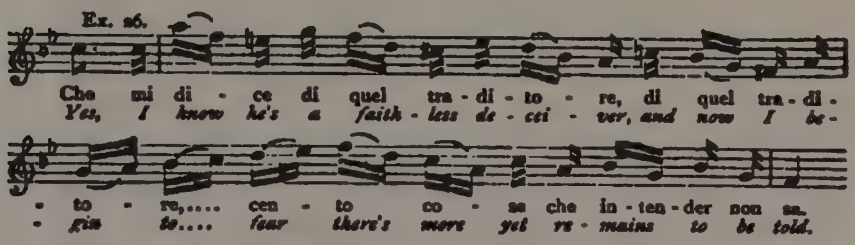
Ex. 85.



which is first sung by Elvira to the words "Te vuol tradir ancor," and then repeated by violins, clarinet and flute successively in various places. It comes in with comic effect when Don Giovanni interposes and apologizes for Elvira's eccentric behaviour by saying that she is mad. She may well seem mad to

them, with her wild outburst that mixes the styles of "patter" and *coloratura* so strangely:—

Ex. 26.


Che mi di - ce di quel tra - di - to - re, di quel tra - di -
Yes, I know he's a faith - less de - cei - ver, and now I be -
- to - re,.... cen - to co - se che in - ten - der non si.
- gin to.... hear there's more yet re - mains to be told.

Further on such little dignity as she had breaks down completely.

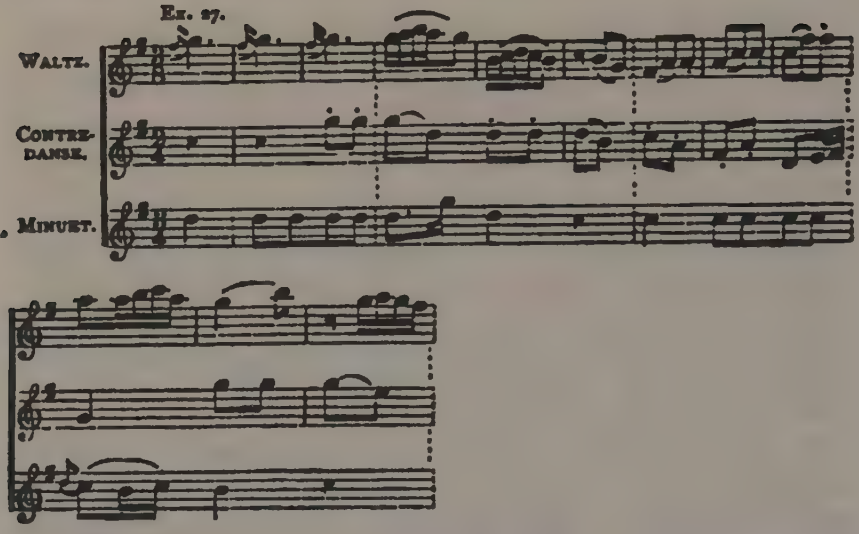
With Donna Anna's recitative and aria ("Or sai chi l'onore") we return to tragedy for a moment. It is on this occasion above all others that we feel the utter inadequacy of Don Ottavio. We had hoped on his first appearance that his character would be developed as the opera went on; but instead of that he becomes steadily less and less interesting. He follows Anna about like a little dog, and she certainly treats him no better. Mozart has made her a curiously harsh and unsympathetic character; she is not so much the heroine of grand opera as the virago—Electra rather than Ilia.

Don Giovanni and Leporello restore us to the normal atmosphere, and after "Fin ch' han dal vino," and "Batti, batti," about which it is unnecessary to say anything, we proceed to the finale. Da Ponte has here provided Mozart with a series of movements on an unusually large scale. The first episode recalls the scene in "Figaro" where the Count discovers Cherubino hidden in Susanna's arm-chair. Zerlina has just made her peace with Masetto, when Don Giovanni's voice is heard outside. She proposes to hide from him, but Masetto suspects that she only

wishes to avoid Don Giovanni in order to prevent her rightful lover from observing her relations with him. The cunning peasant himself hides, so that Don Giovanni, at any rate, may expose himself further. Zerlina feigns timidity; Don Giovanni gently draws her towards the arbour, and to his surprise finds Masetto there. As usual, he manages to cover up his embarrassment; music is heard on the stage, and he invites them both to join the dancers, which they do with alacrity. Don Ottavio, Donna Anna and Donna Elvira enter masked. It is the energetic Elvira who takes the lead, the gentle Ottavio who follows whatever lead is offered him, and Anna who can hardly bring herself to any act of boldness. A window in the palace is opened by Leporello, and we catch the last phrase of a minuet, played by the orchestra inside. As the dance repeats itself, Leporello sees the three masks, and draws Don Giovanni's attention to them; he tells Leporello to invite them, and they accept the invitation. The dance comes to an end, and Leporello shuts the window again. There follows the trio "Protegga il giusto cielo," one of those ensembles such as I have described before, in which no action takes place, but there is a moment of lyrical contemplation, which provides a point of repose and also prepares the audience for the importance of the action to follow immediately—an effect of great psychological value, but only possible to execute in the drama of music. All who have seen the opera will remember how startlingly impressive this little terzetto is; its strange beauty is, moreover, much enhanced by the fact that it is accompanied entirely by wind instruments.

The scene changes to a saloon in Don Giovanni's palace. The country people have just finished a dance, and Leporello and the other servants are handing refreshments. After the unwonted tones of the wind instruments in the previous scene, the entry of the strings breaks in with great brilliancy and freshness. Don Giovanni is watching his opportunity to get hold of Zerlina, but the jealousy of Masetto is easily excited, and precautions must be taken. To the sound of a stately march there enter the three masks, ushered in by Leporello, and received by Don Giovanni with the dignity that befits their position. The orchestra on the stage plays a minuet, and to keep up appearances, Don Ottavio dances it with Donna Anna, while Don Giovanni vainly tries to approach Zerlina. Leporello gets rid of Masetto for him by forcing the peasant to dance; but Elvira is still keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings. As the minuet concludes, a second orchestra on the stage (it consists only of violins and bass) starts a contre-danse, while the first orchestra repeats the minuet. Don Giovanni dances this with Zerlina, while Leporello keeps Masetto occupied by making him dance a waltz, which is started by a third orchestra. This arrangement of three orchestras on the stage was apparently entirely Mozart's idea, designed no doubt with an eye to the excellent instrumentalists for which Prague was celebrated. It is very seldom that these three orchestras are made effective on the stage, even when the players are actually there, which is not always the case. As it is naturally impossible to make the three dances apparent in a pianoforte arrangement, it may interest some readers to see how they are contrived to fit.

Ex. 27.



The waltz is of course of little importance, and taken by itself is a very odd sort of dance, the rhythm of which we must suppose to have been purposely distorted so as to make the peasants ridiculous, unless we venture to think that Mozart did not take the trouble to make it fit any better. The contre-danse, on the other hand, is a very pleasant little tune. A glance at the score shows us another instance of Mozart's practical common sense. When the minuet is played alone, it is played by oboes, horns, and complete strings. The second orchestra, reduced to violins and bass, either from considerations of space or for want of more players, is obviously too feeble to stand out against the first, so as soon as the minuet has been started for the second time, the wind instruments are drafted off to the second orchestra. They do not leave their seats, of course, but their music, while fitting in with the harmony of the minuet, really supports the melody of the contre-danse, until at the second half of the minuet they revert to the first orchestra, since the entry of Donna Anna at that

moment requires the contre-danse to fall into the background again, the more especially as the third orchestra is just heard tuning up at the same time. As soon as Donna Anna leaves off singing, the wind instruments go back to the contre-danse, until the waltz begins, when they divide their functions, the oboes playing with the contre-danse and the horns accompanying the waltz. By this time the audience knows the tune of the minuet so well that it can follow it with the strings alone.

It is just at this moment that Zerlina is heard screaming for help. The stage orchestras stop playing and go away, since Zerlina's cries produce a general confusion. The door behind which they are heard is forced, and Zerlina comes out, followed by Don Giovanni, who is pretending to throw the blame on Leporello and threatening him with a drawn sword. The three conspirators are not deceived by this, but throw off their masks, and openly accuse Don Giovanni, Don Ottavio even holding a pistol to his head. What happens after this is not indicated either in the libretto or the score. A long movement in the usual finale manner begins here, and it is fairly clear that both Da Ponte and Mozart were concerned not so much with the development of the drama, as with *lo strepitoso, l'arcistrepitoso, lo strepitosissimo.* It is, in fact, a comic-opera finale of the most conventional kind, and only differs from the finales of "Figaro" or "Così fan tutte" in being rather larger and also less interesting. The only difference between the formula of a scale in reiterated quavers used by Sarti (quoted in Ex. 15) and that used by Mozart is that one takes the scale upwards and the other down. Of course, it need hardly be said

that Mozart's *strepitosissimo* is better laid out and more carefully and elaborately scored than any other composer would have done it; but its lack of real musical or dramatic interest is only disguised by the fact that it is preceded by an extraordinarily long chain of movements in which there is abundance of real poetic inspiration, so that when the last section is reached, it presents itself merely as a rather more than usually aggressive assertion of the chord of C major such as we might find at the end of any extended piece of music of the "classical period."

In the second act Da Ponte's power of invention is fairly lively, but his construction breaks down badly, and the confusion of plot is only redeemed by the beauty of Mozart's music. The first scene is the street before the inn at which Donna Elvira is staying. Don Giovanni and Leporello have escaped somehow from the awkward situation in which we saw them last, and while Don Giovanni is intent on further adventure, Leporello has refused to stay with him any longer. It is always Leporello's game to appear shocked at his master's evil life and threaten to leave him, because he knows that he will always be bribed to stay on. The little duet with which the scene opens ("Eh via, buffone") is therefore devoid of all seriousness, and purposely conventional in character; Leporello and Don Giovanni sing almost exactly the same notes, and there is no differentiation of character, even by giving the two voices different portions of the same tune, except for a few bars. We know at once that master and man have gone through this little duet so often before that it has become a mere comedy, one of those silly jokes that old friends repeat to each other over and over again,

to the annoyance of their less intimate acquaintances, as a sort of secret password of friendship.

Leporello's scruples are satisfied, and with a view to attacking Donna Elvira's maid, Don Giovanni changes cloaks with his servant. At that moment Elvira herself appears on the balcony, and there follows the trio ("Ah, taci, ingiusto core"), which is perhaps the most beautiful number of the whole opera. Elvira has veered round again from indignation to desire. Her reason still tells her that Don Giovanni is a deceiver, but her passions are, as always, too strong for her to control. Impulsive and rather sentimental, she stands on the balcony in the warm night and contemplates her own emotions with deliberate romance. Leporello sees her, and Don Giovanni perceives at once that Elvira is in that frame of mind when the prospect of an adventure of any kind will make her throw reason to the winds. He forms his plan at once, stands behind Leporello, whom she naturally takes for his master, and addresses her in tones of exaggerated pathos. The trick succeeds, and we watch her gradually yielding to temptation, as the voice of Don Giovanni grows more and more insistent, adjuring, cajoling, threatening suicide —he has done it so often that he almost believes in his own words—while Leporello watches the game in a fit of suppressed laughter.

The music of this trio at once recalls the trio in "Zaide" to which reference was made in an earlier chapter[1] (Ex. 12). Italian as it is in its melodic details, the point of view of the whole composition is more German than Italian. The characters are

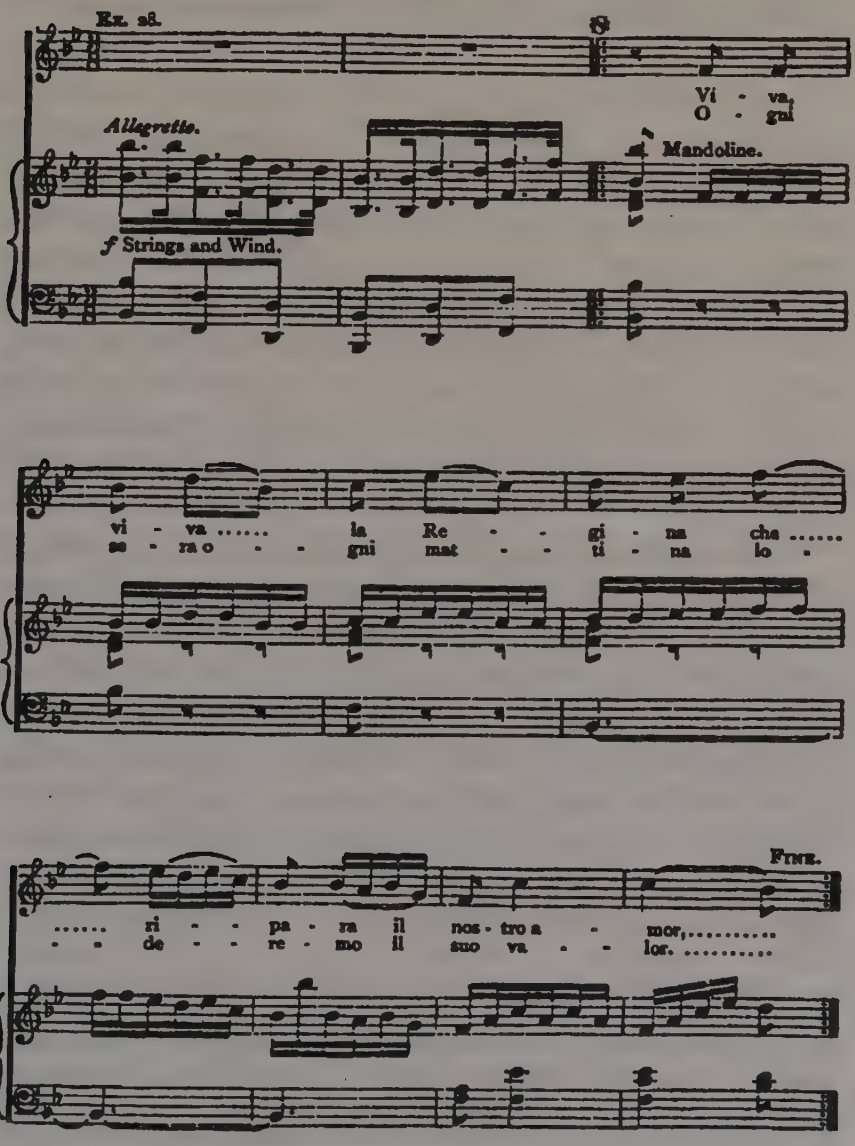
[1] There is also a certain resemblance to the song "Dolce mi parve un dì" in Martin's "Una cosa rara." It is unfortunately too long to print here.

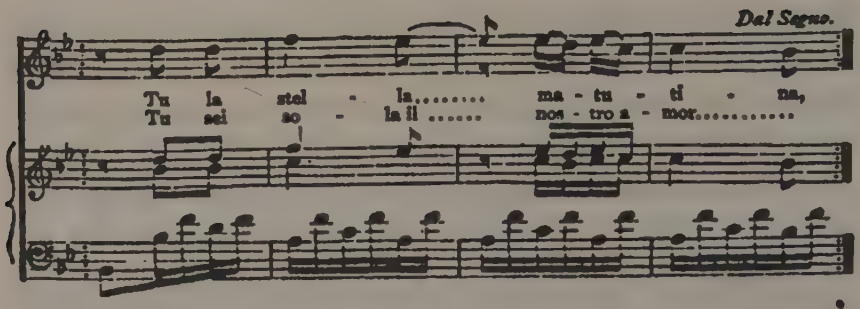
presented clearly enough to begin with; but when the three voices unite to repeat the theme of Elvira's opening words their individualities become merged in Mozart's. Elvira, Don Giovanni, Leporello cease to be persons: they are merely representatives of musical themes, which are transferred from one to another as the composer wills. It is not what we commonly understand by drama; but when used with judgment by a composer who can show himself an absolute master of drama whenever he wishes, it has a very great emotional and poetical value, as we have already seen in the earlier operas, notably in "Idomeneo."

Elvira leaves the window, and Don Giovanni reveals his plan; Leporello is to receive the lady in the character of his master, and manage somehow to get her safely out of the way, so that Don Giovanni may pay his attentions to the maid. Elvira comes forth, and Leporello carries out his instructions; she falls into the trap without a moment's hesitation, and proceeds to lavish caresses on Leporello, who enjoys the situation extremely. It is a scene which is rather unpleasant even when the whole opera is taken in a spirit of unrestrained amusement; if we are to regard "Don Giovanni" as a tragedy, this episode is revolting in the extreme. Don Giovanni pretends to attack them as a robber, and they fly, leaving the stage clear for the serenade.

"Deh vieni alla finestra" is so famous a song that description of it is unnecessary and poetic analysis of it ridiculous. The only thing that calls for comment here is the mandoline accompaniment, which only too often is played on a violin *pizzicato* to the ruin of its effect. The use of the mandoline in the orchestra was nothing new, as we have seen in the

case of Paisiello's "Il barbiere"; moreover, Martin had made use of it also in "Una cosa rara." This last example is worth quoting, as the style of the melody is sufficiently like Don Giovanni's serenade to make it probable that Mozart had noted its effect, and meant to show what might be done with the idea.


Ex. 28.
Vi - va,
O - gni
Allegretto.
Mandoline.
f Strings and Wind.
vi - va ..... la Re - - gi - na cha .....
se - ra o - - gni mat - - ti - na lo -
Fine.
..... ri - - pa - ra il nos - tro a - mor, ...
- - de - - re - mo il suo va - - lor. .....



Martin's innocent melody no doubt pleased the audiences of the period, and the syncopations would be regarded as Spanish local colour. Mozart, as usual, makes no pretence of being Spanish, and Da Ponte, as far as I can judge, seems to have visualized the story in some Italian town of his own time. In fact, the real prototype of Don Giovanni's serenade is a song composed by Mozart himself, "Komm, liebe Zither," with a similar accompaniment for mandoline,[1] which is supposed to have been written as far back as 1780.

No sooner has Don Giovanni finished his song than he is interrupted by the arrival of Masetto, who takes him for Leporello. The aria in which Don Giovanni distributes the other peasants to right and left in search of his supposed self, keeping Masetto behind for a good beating, is very amusing, and many critics have pointed out how Don Giovanni begins by imitating the musical style of the servant, and as he proceeds forgets his part and unwittingly expands into the expression of his own character. Zerlina's well-

[1] The resemblance is so curious that, in view of the numerous songs wrongly ascribed to Mozart, one might well suppose this song to be a deliberate imitation of "Deh vieni alla finestra"; but all authorities accept it as Mozart's, although no autograph of it is known. It is printed in the complete edition of Mozart's songs (Breitkopf and Haertel) and also in the selection edited by Prof. Max Friedlaender (Edition Peters).

known aria "Vedrai carino" calls for no comment, except to point out that the older Italian comic operas, as far back as Pergolesi and Logroscino, are full of arias in which the beating of the heart is comically illustrated, though seldom with so much grace as Mozart has shown.

We come now to the great sextet "Sola, sola in questo loco." I shall have occasion later on to consider the stage-management of this curious and difficult scene, and confine myself here to a discussion of the music. Considered purely as music, this sextet is one of the most important numbers of the whole opera. It is a long and complicated series of movements, in the course of which various things take place, and it is remarkably full of real musical ideas, many of which are of a distinctly serious cast. Leporello and Elvira, in the course of their wanderings through the town, have momentarily taken refuge in the courtyard of a palace, to avoid a party of people with lights, since Elvira has not yet discovered her mistake, and Leporello does not want to expose himself. He further thinks this will be a good opportunity for escaping altogether from Elvira under cover of the darkness, but is defeated, since he cannot find the door at which he came in. It so happens that the palace is Donna Anna's palace, and the lights which Leporello has seen are those carried by the servants escorting Donna Anna home, followed, needless to say, by the inevitable Ottavio. Leporello at last finds the doorway, but only to walk straight into the arms of Zerlina and Masetto, whom we must suppose to have been walking along the street just at that moment, since they have no motive for entering Donna Anna's palace, unless perhaps

they thought that the dark court offered a convenient seclusion for their endearments. They naturally take Leporello for his master, and he, to save himself, throws off the cloak, to the confusion of Elvira; Donna Anna, gravely scandalized, at once retires into the house, leaving Ottavio on the doorstep.

The situation is totally unnecessary to the drama and leads up to nothing, unless to the fact that Ottavio goes for the police, which he might have done without so elaborate a musical preparation. It is obvious that the only reason for placing the scene in the courtyard of Donna Anna's palace was that it was an excuse for bringing all the characters except Don Giovanni on to the stage one after another to sing a concerted piece. And why should Da Ponte want them to sing a concerted piece? Obviously, he intended it to be the finale of the second act, the remainder of the drama occupying the third act. This would have been quite a reasonable plan, since the third act would then have dealt almost exclusively with the episode of the Statue. Moreover, since the Statue and Masetto were sung by the same singer, he would have had more time to get into his armour and mount his marble horse. It seems clear too that Mozart also conceived the music of the sextet in this sense; it does not become so strepitous as the finale of Act I, nevertheless it is planned all along on the lines of a finale, and not on the lines of a contemplative ensemble. There are further reasons in support of this theory. Don Ottavio's aria "Il mio tesoro" is a decided anticlimax, and indeed Leporello's apologetic aria "Ah! pietà, signori miei" is itself an anticlimax; the great sextet has by its very greatness entirely ruined the scene. I imagine Da Ponte

to have planned the opera in the usual three acts, although the custom of having three acts was not rigidly maintained, "Figaro" being in four, and "Una cosa rara" in two. He judges the length of his first act more or less by Bertati's one, but forgets that Mozart's music will make it a good deal too long. Mozart does not realize this until most of the opera has been composed, and finding it too late to alter the first act, insists on Acts II and III being squeezed into one. Whether Da Ponte was made to cut out some scenes, and, if so, what they represented, I will not attempt to conjecture. But it seems probable that when once the main alteration had been decided upon, Leporello's "Ah! pietà" was inserted, in order to continue the scene and to give the singer another aria. I imagine that Don Ottavio's aria "Il mio tesoro" had already been composed, or at any rate that the words had already been written, with the idea that the song should be addressed not to Masetto, Zerlina, and Elvira, or any other human being, but to zephyrs, roses, sighs, or any other Metastasian substitute for the workaday channels of information. As the libretto stands, the preliminary recitative is absurd. "My friends," says Don Ottavio, "after such dreadful outrages we can no longer doubt that Don Giovanni is the impious murderer of Donna Anna's father; remain in this house for a few hours. I intend to have recourse to the proper persons, and in a few moments I promise to avenge you. Duty, pity, and affection bid this be done. (*Aria*) In the meanwhile go and console my beloved, and endeavour to dry her tears," &c. It is most unjust to suppose that because Don Giovanni has played a rather abominable practical joke on

Donna Elvira that he has therefore assassinated the father of another lady; moreover, given Donna Anna's very reserved temperament and her rigid insistence on the external observances incumbent upon wearers of mourning,[1] it is hardly likely that at such a very late hour of the night he would have invited two peasants and a strange lady with a tarnished reputation to spend a few hours in inflicting their consolations upon her. Da Ponte had far too much common sense to have planned such an absurdity originally, and Mozart, we may be sure, would have been the first to point it out. But at the stage of the proceedings which I have indicated, time was pressing; Da Ponte was probably not yet clear of Martin's "L'arbore di Diana," and had already begun to work by imperial command on Salieri's "Axur." The alterations had to be made quickly, and neither poet nor composer could afford to stop and consider whether the work was well done or not, as long as it would hold together. It seems therefore fairly clear that Ottavio's aria is not really in its right place here.

When "Don Giovanni" was performed at Vienna in May 1788, various alterations were made in this scene. Ottavio's aria was omitted altogether, and its place was taken by a comic scene for Zerlina and Leporello, in which she ties him to a chair. They sing a duet ("Per queste tue manine"), and while Zerlina goes to fetch Donna Elvira, Leporello makes a grotesque escape, dragging after him the chair and the window to which the other end of the cord was fastened. Elvira enters, and then sings a recitative ("In quali eccessi") and aria ("Mi tradì quell'alma

[1] It must be noted that Da Ponte expressly says that Donna Anna and Don Ottavio enter "dressed in mourning" in the sextet.

ingrata"). There is no reason to assume that the Vienna version represents Mozart's own reconsideration of the opera. The aria for Ottavio was left out because it was beyond the singer's powers, and another aria ("Dalla sua pace") was substituted for it and inserted in the first act. The scene between Leporello and Zerlina was added merely to provide more of the low-comedy element; and "Mi tradì" was written to please Madame Cavalieri. The beauty of this aria has caused it to be almost universally retained, although it is rather obviously a concert aria in style, and it is difficult to reconcile with the character of Elvira at this particular moment. It is, however, much more difficult to reconcile it with her character in the place where it is very often inserted now, namely, directly after Leporello's catalogue aria. If the scene in the courtyard is not to end with the sextet, this aria of Donna Elvira's seems at least a more appropriate thing to follow it than "Il mio tesoro"; but the whole matter is in a hopeless state of confusion.

The next scene brings us to the cemetery. Don Giovanni has taken refuge there after another adventure, the lady in this case being a flame of Leporello, who does not appreciate the jest so cordially. It is here that the voice of the Statue is heard for the first time reproving Don Giovanni's laughter; and it speaks again, as Don Giovanni, suspecting some hidden enemy, strikes about with his sword among the tombs. As with the oracle in "Idomeneo," the mysterious voice is accompanied by the trombones, which have not been employed in the opera at all before. It is very possible that here, as in "Idomeneo," Mozart intended the trombones to be on the stage, hidden behind the Statue; the fact that the oboes,

clarinets and bassoons play with them is no bar to this, since the opera requires a pretty complete orchestra on the stage at various times in addition to the normal one. The duet in which the invitation to supper is given, first by Leporello and then by Don Giovanni, is a fine study of the two characters—Leporello overcome with fear, Don Giovanni fearing nothing, because he believes in nothing. There is even a faint touch of almost Weberish romanticism in this duet; we almost feel as if Don Giovanni had got into the wrong century by mistake, and was himself half-conscious of it, as he sings "bizarra è in ver la scena."

The scene which follows seems to have no reason whatever for its existence, except to give Donna Anna the opportunity of singing an aria. "Non mi dir" has always been a famous aria, and it is certainly a very beautiful one, though singularly cold and unemotional. Some critics have severely censured the *coloratura* passage in the latter half of the aria, but we shall not get very far in the appreciation of Mozart if we start from the hypothesis that all *coloratura* is an unworthy concession to the vanity of Italian *prime donne*. On the contrary, after the almost over-declamatory style of Anna's previous utterances, it is a great relief to hear her indulge in real singing for once, and the unexpected little rush of florid vocalization is a definite contribution to her personality, though I will not attempt to find words to translate it.

We come now to the finale. Here Mozart was again able to refer to Gazzaniga's score for a few ideas. The cemetery scene in the older opera was apparently all in *recitativo secco*, and even this has been much cut down by a later hand. In the next

scene, as will be remembered, we see Lanterna, the second servant of Don Giovanni, receiving Donna Elvira, who on the entrance of Don Giovanni adjures him to repent. It is not until after his exit that the musicians on the stage begin to play their *concertino*. On this follow the toasts to the ladies of whatever town the company happened to be visiting. Gazzaniga did not make any very great effect with the entrance of the Statue; but the following movement, curiously marked "Fuga" in the score, although it is nothing but an aria for Don Giovanni, is dramatic and expressive. The audience were intended to have plenty of time to observe him being tortured by devils, and the tremolos, scales, and other vigorous passages for the orchestra were no doubt considered horribly realistic at that date. In connection with this it is interesting to note that although the printed libretto, as has been already mentioned, goes on to a final scene in which the other characters return to the stage to sing a proper finale, the score of the opera in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde at Vienna ends with Don Giovanni's descent into Hell. There are, however, two other scores in existence, which I have not seen, and the real finale may possibly be included in one or both of them. The Vienna score is so very fragmentary all through that it cannot pretend to represent the complete opera.

Mozart's scene opens with a brilliant introduction, in which great use is made of trumpets and drums, as in the first finale, when Don Giovanni comes into the park to invite the peasants to the feast, and again when the three masks enter the ball-room. The musicians are on the stage, and at Don Giovanni's

word begin to play. Only one of their three pieces is familiar to modern audiences, and its appearance in this context has puzzled many opera-goers. Don Giovanni, like any fine gentleman of Prague, has his own domestic musicians, and the tunes they proceed to perform are naturally enough the popular tunes of the day, although our modern listener has probably never heard of Martin's "Una cosa rara" or Sarti's "I due litiganti," and is so much accustomed to regard Mozart as a classic that he cannot conceive of a time when "Non più andrai" was the latest accomplishment of every whistling street-boy. Whether Mozart's keenly satirical mind had any malicious intention in making the band play these particular tunes, I do not know; it is curious that with all the legends current about "Don Giovanni," there appear to be none relating to this episode.[1] The first piece is the concluding movement of the finale to Act I of "Una cosa rara"; the second is the scoffing song "Come un agnello" from "I due litiganti." Neither of these choices seems to have any dramatic significance; they were probably selected merely because they were popular. The third tune is, of course, "Non più andrai" from "Figaro." Whatever may have been Mozart's motive for introducing these three tunes, they serve at any rate one useful purpose, and that is to show modern audiences how much inferior the music of Martin and Sarti was to his.

It will be noted that in this group of pieces played on the stage the music is all set for wind instruments alone, whereas in the ball-room scene of Act I, the three orchestras consist mainly of strings. This might

[1] Germany still has disciples of Rochlitz capable of inventing them if required.

have been done merely for variety's sake; but it has recently been suggested[1] that the first act was written in Vienna, Mozart having then presumably no certain knowledge as to what orchestral resources he could count upon, and that the last finale was written, or at any rate these three pieces inserted, after Mozart had arrived at Prague, and had had occasion to note the excellence of the Bohemian wind-players. The author of this suggestion finds further corroboration of this in the fact that the little remarks of Leporello about the various pieces do not occur in the original libretto. If, however, the Munich reprint of this libretto (1896) is accurate, this is not strictly true; there is no allusion to the "Litiganti," but Leporello does say, "Bravo, cosa rara!" and later on "Questa poi la conosco pur troppo," which is now supposed to refer to "Non più andrai," the feminine form *questa* implying presumably *musica* or *aria*. The words "Bravo, cosa rara!" may quite well have referred originally in Da Ponte's mind to the dish which at that moment is being set before Don Giovanni; the other sentence is less easy of explanation. It would be more reasonable to say simply *questo* (and of course *lo* for *la*) than to imply an imaginary *cosa* or *roba* for it to agree with; at the same time there has been no allusion to music for several lines, nor indeed to anything grammatically feminine, except the table which was prepared in the first line of all! But it is clear that at the precise moment Leporello is much too busy eating to think of anything else, and if we read the libretto by itself, the easiest way to understand the line is to suppose

[1] Alfred Schnerich, "Wie sahen die ersten Vorstellungen von Mozart's Don Juan aus?" (*Zeitschrift der internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, January 1911).

that Leporello holds up some other piece of food for the audience to see before he crams it into his mouth. If this explanation be accepted, we can then agree with the suggestion that all three pieces of music were inserted at the last moment. Whatever may have been the exact time of their addition, the fact that the three tunes are set for wind instruments alone gives them a peculiarly delightful quality of tone.

The little concert is suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Elvira, and we see at once that Da Ponte was wise in transposing the order of these two episodes, since the previous festive music makes a good contrast to Elvira's passionate appeal, and gives her appearance more importance. The hurrying violins give us the impression of breathless haste; Donna Elvira is indeed so much excited that she does not make herself very clear, and it is not very unreasonable that Don Giovanni should treat her outburst with mocking courtesy. She is supposed to have undergone another emotional reaction, and to have decided to go back to her convent again; but from all that she actually says, Don Giovanni might quite well suppose that she was merely asking him to give up his pleasures in order to settle down to marriage and respectability with herself. Mozart has given us a wonderful expression of Don Giovanni's character in this scene, if actors were equal to realizing it. There is a delightful exuberance about his shouts of

Vivan le femmine!
Viva il buon vino,
Sostegno e gloria
D'umanità!

with the long-held note on the last syllable carried over in the most Italian operatic fashion on to a

repetition of the characteristic and well-known phrase to which the last two lines are set. Leporello seems rather *de trop* in this scene. His comments on the heartlessness of his master are not very much in keeping with his character as shown hitherto, if they are intended to be serious; and if it is the case that they are intended to be serious, they are sung to such characterless phrases—mere fillings-up of the harmony—that they carry no conviction whatever.

Elvira rushes out, and as she reaches the door gives a shriek that for the moment upsets even Don Giovanni's equanimity, as the decisive modulation to C minor plainly shows. He sends Leporello to see what is the matter, and Leporello, with a cry almost as startling as Elvira's, returns in a condition of grotesque terror. From this point onwards the finale is a strange mixture of tragedy and farce. Such a mixture is, of course, based on a fundamental truth of human nature, and it is in evidence throughout the Italian opera of the seventeenth century; Alessandro Scarlatti, at any rate in his early operas, allows the comic servant, especially when she is an elderly female, to scatter her absurd remarks broadcast in the most unexpected places. But the custom died out in his day, and the comic characters gradually detached themselves from the rest of the opera, and formed *intermezzi* which eventually were regarded as quite separate works. The sentimental type of *opera buffa* fashionable in Mozart's day retained to some extent traces of them; and it is obvious that the two servants Pasquariello and Lanterna in Gazzaniga's "Don Giovanni" are closely related to our old friends of the Italian comedy of masks, Arlecchino and Brighella. The genuine *opera seria* never tolerated such incon-

sistencies, at least not during the reign of the all-powerful Metastasio.

Leporello's description of the Statue's arrival is frankly comic, and the duet between him and Don Giovanni maintains this character, even when the Commendatore's knocks are heard. Don Giovanni takes a light from the table and goes to open the door: Leporello creeps under the table. The Commendatore enters, heralded by the massive chords with which the overture began; but in this place they gain the additional solemnity of the trombones. There is, however, some uncertainty as to Mozart's intentions on this point. The autograph score in the library of the Paris Conservatoire has no parts for trombones, trumpets or drums at this point, and they have been put into the score as printed in the complete works of Mozart (Breitkopf and Haertel) on the authority of a manuscript score at Dresden, supplied from Prague at the time when Luigi Bassi, the original Don Giovanni of the Prague production, was stage manager of the Dresden opera. When "Don Giovanni" was performed in 1896 at the Residenz-Theatre in Munich with the closest possible fidelity to the original production, it was firmly maintained[1] that there was no authority for the employment of trombones in this movement. Even if there were no trombones at the first performance, there seems reason to believe, from various early copies, that Mozart himself added them to the score at a later date; but the question cannot be considered as definitely decided, since it would be unsafe to assume that all Mozart's later alterations of the opera were intended by him to be of permanent authority. As, however, the

[1] Preface to the libretto, by Oskar Merz.

Statue is accompanied by trombones in the cemetery scene, it seems reasonable that they should accompany him in Don Giovanni's palace, provided that the practical difficulty of there being one group on the stage and the other in the orchestra can be got over satisfactorily. There is also a further good reason for their employment, and that is that the Commendatore having a good deal to say, his supernatural impressiveness is in practice very liable to break down before he has come to the end of his part; the awe-inspiring voices of the trombones are therefore very useful in helping him to sustain the dignity of his position. As in the previous scene, Leporello still continues to present a comic aspect, chattering and shivering with fright under the table; Don Giovanni, who is always a very reasonable man, begins to get a trifle impatient, at least as far as his invariable courtesy will permit, at the somewhat long-winded utterances of the Commendatore.

The Commendatore invites Don Giovanni to supper. He accepts, and at the Statue's bidding gives his hand upon the compact. Here the music quickens its pace, and the dialogue becomes almost a recitative, although accompanied not only by the throbbing violins but by full blasts from the wind, and a rapid ascending scale in the basses which recalls the accompaniment to the duel in the first scene of all. "Repent! Repent!" thunders the Statue. "No!" cries Don Giovanni. Then suddenly there is a momentary hush. "There is no more time to repent," says the Statue, and disappears. It is now that the climax of horror is reached; even Don Giovanni is assailed by a sense of fear which he has never known before. The sudden alternations of loud

and soft bars in the orchestra disconcert the nerves like the pitching of a ship in a storm; an invisible chorus of devils calls to Don Giovanni through the rising flames and rolling thunder to descend to eternal torment. The devils rise from the depths; they seize him, they drag him down as he utters his last cry of agony, while Leporello crouches under the table, watching his master's struggles.

The orchestra settles down to the chord of D minor; the flames and devils have disappeared. Leporello is still crouching under the table paralysed with terror, in the half-darkened room, when Elvira, Zerlina, Ottavio and Masetto burst in, accompanied by the police, to seize Don Giovanni and hand him over to the arm of the law. Donna Anna has come with them, but, as usual, stands a little apart. She does not join in their first excited shout of "Ah! dov' è il perfido?" Leporello with grim humour says that Don Giovanni is out of their reach. They demand an explanation, and curiosity leads even Donna Anna to join in here. He tells his story, in his grotesque fashion. There is a momentary shiver, as first Elvira and then the others recall the mysterious figure that each of them has seen on the road; then tactful Ottavio, Don Giovanni having been finally disposed of by a higher power, leads the way to a general settlement of affairs, as befits a *dramma giocoso*, by expressing the hope that Donna Anna will now permit him to lead her to the altar; to which she replies, with that characteristic propriety for which Mozart's *coloratura* seems precisely the correct expression, that after the decent interval of a year's mourning, she will in all probability condescend to confer her hand upon him. Elvira with less cere-

mony and with a certain bitter tone of disillusionment, announces that she intends to resume the veil, while Zerlina and Masetto, transferring her phrase from minor to major, prepare to trot home to their interrupted rustic wedding-feast. Leporello, who has become a cheery optimist again, will go to the tavern to find a better master. And so, after the united exclamation of

Resti dunque quel birbon
Con Proserpina e Pluton,

which is more or less equivalent for dignity of diction to "a good riddance of bad rubbish," they bring the opera to an end with a copy-book maxim starting off as if it were going to be an elaborate fugue, but turning almost at once into a proper Italian finale, with just a few pretences at contrapuntal devices thrown in—who could have done anything so ingeniously effective but a real master of counterpoint like Mozart?—so that the audience may disperse to their supper-parties edified, but not so much so as to forget that they have been thoroughly amused.

CHAPTER X

"DON GIOVANNI"—III

PRAGUE had accepted "Don Giovanni" with enthusiasm; Vienna was less appreciative. Salieri did his best to prevent the opera being represented at all, since he had just completed his revision of the French "Tarare" under the name of "Axur, re d'Ormuz," which came out in January 1788 and aroused great interest. It was not until the following May that "Don Giovanni" was presented to a Vienna audience, and then only at the express command of the Emperor Joseph II, who in spite of his limited intelligence for music was always ready to give Mozart a certain amount of encouragement. There were various troubles with the singers. Morella, the tenor, had to have a new aria written for him, "Dalla sua pace"; Madame Cavalieri insisted on a *scena* for Elvira, and either the singers or the manager wanted a comic duet for Zerlina and Leporello. As a result of these additions, the second part of the last finale had to be cut out, the opera ending with the death of Don Giovanni.

The cast could hardly have been bettered. Leporello was Benucci, who had created the part of Figaro; the Cavalieri sang Elvira, and Anna was taken by Aloysia Lange. About the protagonist we know little. It was not Mandini, the original Count Almaviva, as has generally been stated, but Francesco

Albertarelli, who had only recently come to Vienna. Mozart wrote for him shortly afterwards a lively air, "Un bacio di mano," to sing in an opera of Anfossi's; it is obvious from this that he was a *buffo* singer of the usual type. The first performance met with little success; further repetitions taught the public to understand it better, but the opera after fifteen performances disappeared from the repertory after December 15, and except for a single performance in German in 1792, probably organized by Schikaneder, it was not heard again in Vienna for another ten years. It was taken up in 1789 at Mannheim and Hamburg, translated into German, and in 1790 was given in Berlin, the visit of the composer in 1788 having awakened a good deal of interest in his work.

The criticism of the *Chronik von Berlin* was written in a style of contemptuous condescension which is not unknown even nowadays in the musical journalism of the Prussian capital. The writer considered the opera to have been much overrated, and to be deficient in sincere feeling. Grétry, Monsigny, and Philidor are the composers whom he held up as an ideal; Mozart he thought was too much bent on astonishing his audience. That the opera drew crowded houses was incontestable; but that was due to the attraction of a ghost in armour and a chorus of fire-breathing furies. Another critic considered Don Giovanni to be "a very suitable opera for Saturday night!"[1] A third admitted Mozart to be a musical genius, but thought him wanting in general culture and uneducated in taste. This may not have

[1] I once saw "The Bohemian Girl" described in these identical terms in the preliminary announcement of a performance at the Cambridge Theatre.

been very far from the truth, at any rate judging Mozart by the standard of literary education which we expect from English composers at the present day; but we must remember that Berlin heard "Don Giovanni" in an indifferent translation by Schröder, so that the brilliant humour of Da Ponte's libretto, which is such an important factor in the opera, counted for nothing. A fourth critic said of it, "In this opera the eye is feasted and the ear enchanted, but reason is offended and morality insulted, while vice is allowed to trample upon virtue and sensibility." In Munich the opera was forbidden at first by the censor, and only performed at the special command of the Elector. Beethoven, as is well known, had a passionate admiration for the music, but said that he could never bring himself to write an opera on so immoral a subject as those of "Figaro" and "Don Giovanni."

In 1813 there appeared a tale by E. T. A. Hoffmann entitled "Don Juan, eine fabelhafte Begebenheit, die sich mit einem reisenden Enthusiasten zugetragen." It is to this story that we may trace the first expression of the nineteenth-century misinterpretation of Mozart's opera. Hoffmann was not only a prose-writer of distinction—he is indeed one of the most fascinating authors in the whole history of German literature—but a musician as well. He was no mere talkative amateur like Browning, but the composer of eleven operas, one of which was recently revived in Germany, and, in fact, the leader of that school of literary musicians and musical men of letters which included Schumann and Weber, Heine and Berlioz. It would be absurd to deny their genius, but it must not be forgotten that

musical interpretation is a dangerous amusement, and the more dangerous the more fluent is the pen of the interpreter. Hoffmann's "Don Juan," moreover, is not a mere piece of musical criticism; it is in the first place a fantastic story, in which the writer's imagination very naturally runs away with his critical judgment.

Hoffmann's travelling enthusiast attends a performance of "Don Giovanni" in a town of the borderland between Germany and Italy, where Italian is sufficiently familiar for the opera to be given in its original language. He discovers the performance by accident, and finds to his surprise that he can enter a box in the theatre by simply walking through a door in his own bedroom at the hotel.[1] In the course of the first act he becomes aware that there is a lady with him in the box. He does not look at her until the end of the first act, and then finds that it is Donna Anna herself. They discuss the opera together, and at the beginning of the second act she leaves him. After the performance he eats his supper and then retires; finding the room stuffy, he transfers his writing-table to the box of the theatre (which one would have thought would have been stuffier still), and sits down to enjoy a jorum of punch and write a long letter to his invariable confidant, whose name is Theodor. The story is, of course, an excuse for an analysis and explanation of "the opera of all operas."[2]

For Hoffmann, Don Giovanni is what modern phrase calls a superman, and Anna comes very near

[1] The hotel is still flourishing, but the theatre, which had been built into the courtyard of it in the eighteenth century, has been condemned as unsafe, and is shortly to be demolished.

[2] These are Hoffmann's words; the phrase has sometimes been ascribed to Wagner.

to being a superwoman. She is the woman destined for him by Heaven; but he meets her too late. All he could do was to violate her; and from that moment she is consumed by an unearthly passion for him. She requires at the same time both the destruction of Don Giovanni, and the satisfaction of her own desire. She spurs on her cold-blooded [1] lover Ottavio to revenge, but when Don Giovanni has disappeared she cannot think of marrying him. When at the end she tells him that he must wait a year, she knows that she will never live that year out—"Don Ottavio will never clasp in his arms the woman who has been saved only by her inborn piety from becoming the elect bride of Satan."

From the moment this story was published, "Don Giovanni" seems to have become popular in Germany; but it was a popularity based on a misunderstanding. Hoffmann, we see, stands a good deal nearer to the eighteenth century than our modern "travelling enthusiasts"; no one dares to suggest nowadays that Donna Anna had allowed herself to be completely overpowered in the struggle which precedes her first entrance. Hoffmann is also quite ready to enjoy a realistic representation of Hell in the second act, with a stage full of smoke and a legion of live devils, after which he is naturally much relieved when they disappear, and the other characters make their entrance for the final sextet. But the essentials of romanticism are all there; Hoffmann is disgusted at the whole idea of Don Giovanni unless he can read an allegory into him, and he cannot con-

[1] Hoffmann evidently knew Neefe's early translation of the libretto, in which all the names are Germanized, Don Giovanni becoming Herr von Schwänkereich, Leporello Fickfack, and Don Ottavio Herr von Fischblut.

ceive how Mozart could have written such beautiful music unless he had had the same interpretation at the back of his mind.

And so the age of romanticism claimed "Don Giovanni" as a "romantic opera," with the result that at different periods a number of experiments have been tried with a view to representing it in this spirit. With the various German translations that have appeared in the course of the last hundred years and more we need not concern ourselves; it suffices to say that the officious Rochlitz was one of the first to rewrite the libretto, in the prolix German of his day, with a view to raising the moral and poetical tone of the whole work. Most German critics seem to be agreed nowadays that Rochlitz's version is a bad one; but it has been so long established that the initial lines of its songs have become household words in Germany, and audiences apparently resent any alteration as vehemently as the British public would resent a retranslation of Mendelssohn's "Elijah," supposing such a proceeding were urgently desirable.

The scene that follows Don Giovanni's disappearance has almost invariably been discarded altogether. It has even been suggested that it was omitted at the original production, owing to the impossibility of the Commendatore having time to change into the clothes of Masetto, the two parts having been doubled by the same singer; but the Statue vanishes several bars before the end of the scene, and a good deal can be done in a minute and a half, provided that all concerned know precisely what to do. Besides, it is conceivable that a substitute for Masetto was found, as his part in the last scene offers no great difficulties. For the Vienna performance Mozart wrote a single

chord of D major which was sung as a cry of horror by the survivors, just entering as the curtain fell on the catastrophe. The effect was in all probability quite ridiculous, if not impossible to execute, and Mozart has struck his pen through it.

At a performance in Paris the coffin of Donna Anna was brought in, with a procession of mourners singing the "Dies irae" from Mozart's Requiem. Another idea was to let the scene change to the Commendatore's mausoleum, exhibiting his actual funeral ceremony, fragments from Mozart's Requiem being again introduced. A common plan is to transform Don Giovanni's dining-room into the cemetery, in which there rise from their tombs the sheeted ghosts of as many of Don Giovanni's thousand and three victims as the manager can find room for. Whether the Statue can mount his marble horse again in time to preside at this function is a little uncertain. Even on the rare occasions when the final sextet has been retained, it seems to have been thought necessary to make a change of scene. One manager thought the sextet would make a more suitable accompaniment than the Requiem to the Commendatore's funeral; another caused Don Giovanni's palace to collapse, displaying a view of Seville by moonlight, while Donna Anna and the rest come forward from the streets with a crowd of citizens, Leporello crawling out from under the debris.

But it is not merely the finale that has suffered at the hands of officious stage-managers. At Paris in recent years the opera was cut up into five acts. The curtain was never allowed to rise on a *recitativo secco*, so several scenes were introduced by snippets of a few bars from other works of Mozart. In the first finale,

instead of the three orchestras on the stage playing the delightful dances which the composer wrote for them, there was a formal ballet on a grand scale danced to the "Rondo alla turca," the minuet from the G minor symphony and other favourite compositions.

Reference has already been made to a paper recently published on the subject of the stage-management of the first performance, and the writer's admirably ingenious reconstruction of the spectacle is well worth summarizing here. He points out that the opera was carefully planned to suit a theatre of extremely modest resources. Bondini's company had only seven singers and no regular chorus. Mozart therefore restricts his choral writing to the little chorus of peasants accompanying the duet of Zerlina and Masetto when they first enter, the chorus of men-servants who invite the peasants to the dance, and in Act II the invisible chorus of devils. All these three could be sung by ordinary supers in a musical country like Bohemia, as they make no great demands on the intelligence of the singers. Probably too the soloists helped in the chorus of peasants. For the common practice of making the chorus sing the greater part of the first finale, and the second too if it is performed complete, there is no authority. Hoffmann in his "Don Juan" alludes to the "chorus" at the end of the opera, so the tradition may already have crept in in his day; on the other hand, so ardent an admirer of the old Italian opera might quite well have been using the word in the sense in which it is used in most Italian scores of the eighteenth century, signifying merely the homophonic conclusion sung by all the principals together.

The scenery, moreover, was such as any ordinary theatre could provide. The usual attempts at Spanish local colour in the architecture are generally distracting, and it is probable that Da Ponte imagined the Seville of Don Juan's days to be much the same as the Treviso or Verona of his own.[1] If the modern scene-painter insists on some Spanish characteristic at least, let him take the late Renaissance architecture of Palermo as his model. The first thing to bear in mind is that the whole play must move as quickly as possible. Every effort must be made to change the scenes instantaneously, and if their number can with reason be reduced, so much the better. Da Ponte conceived the whole action as taking place within the space of twenty-four hours, although it must be confessed that occasional inconsistencies present themselves. The first scene takes place in the small hours of the morning, before it is light. The duel is fought in almost complete darkness, as has been pointed out in the last chapter; perhaps after the Commendatore dies the first grey dawn might be seen. Da Ponte indicates the next scene as "alba chiara"; evidently Donna Elvira has made her journey by night to avoid the heat of the day. She is going to lodge at a *trattoria di campagna*, just outside the city gates, and it is to this same inn that Masetto and Zerlina come to celebrate their wedding with a feast. It will be convenient if Don Giovanni's country house is visible on the other side of the stage, to avoid a further change; but provision must be made for the arbour in which Masetto hides, and for the window

[1] It is equally probable that he imagined the actors as wearing the costume of his own day also.

opened by Leporello, from beyond which we first hear the strains of the minuet. As however Elvira arrives early in the morning, and the dancing takes place in the late afternoon, a change of scene will at any rate have the advantage of making the over-rapid passage of time less obvious.

For the ball-room scene Schnerich suggests a plan which is admirable in its simplicity. There being no chorus, there is no need for a very vast apartment. The stage represents a perfectly plain rectangular room, at one side of which is the first orchestra, that is, the one which plays the minuet. Two doors in the back wall, right and left, lead into other saloons, in which are placed the other two orchestras. This avoids the absurdity of three orchestras in the same room, and has further advantages. When the scene opens, the peasants have come into the front room for refreshments. The entrance of the three masked persons causes a great sensation: Don Giovanni has no other guests of their social position. The peasants, a little embarrassed and awkward, move gradually off to the other two rooms. In the front room Don Ottavio and Donna Anna dance the minuet by themselves, some of the peasants looking on from the back. It was quite customary at that date for a single couple to dance alone as an exhibition of skill in the art. It has been said that Donna Anna could not dance directly after her father's death; she is however not dancing for pleasure, but only to keep up appearances. She is not even in mourning; Da Ponte expressly indicates her mourning costume for the first time in the sextet of Act II, although most theatres make both her and Ottavio put on deep black for the first meeting with Elvira. In all pro-

bability Da Ponte was thinking of the cloaks and masks worn in Venice when he designed this scene. When Don Giovanni invites Zerlina to dance, they go into the room where the contre-danse is being played; Leporello forces Masetto to dance the waltz in order to get him out of the way into the other of the two back rooms. Leporello, however, has to come back and follow his master with a view to making the necessary entry in the catalogue. The whole of this rather complicated scene will gain considerably by the main part of the stage being kept clear of superfluous people. The peasants are always ready in the background to come forward when required.

What happens at the end of the finale is not clear. Don Ottavio points a pistol at Don Giovanni's head, but there is a good deal of music after that, and the situation is difficult to manage. Da Ponte very likely expected nothing more to happen, but it is practically impossible to perpetuate this operatic convention, and some means must be found of indicating Don Giovanni's ultimate triumph. The experiment has been tried of making Elvira in a sudden fit of passion desert her allies and throw herself in front of Don Giovanni, thereby enabling him to escape in the general confusion. A word of protest must be added against the thunder and lightning which invariably accompany the last movement. This is based on a misunderstanding of Da Ponte's words. He gives no indication of a storm in his stage directions, which are numerous and fairly complete; and it is quite clear that the storm with its thunder and lightning alluded to in the words actually sung is to be construed in a purely metaphorical sense.

The second act opens with the street in front

of Elvira's inn, shortly after dark, or even before, since Don Giovanni says that it is "towards evening." The scene may well become darker as the action proceeds. This part of the opera presents no difficulties. It may be suggested here that Masetto, Zerlina, and their friends of both sexes should avoid the over-elegant costumes generally worn by stage peasants. It is quite possible for them to be both picturesque and natural at the same time.

The scene of the sextet has puzzled many stage-managers. Bulthaupt in his "Dramaturgie der Oper" proposes to place it in the cloister of a church, so that we may suppose Don Ottavio and Donna Anna to be returning from their devotions at the tomb of the Commendatore. A suggestion has also been made that it takes place "in einer öffentlichen Rotunde," that is, in a circular building used as a public passage way, perhaps like that in the Hofburg at Vienna, entered from the Michaelerplatz. Da Ponte's indications are simple enough; the "atrio terreno in casa di Donna Anna" is not, as has been supposed, a private hall in Donna Anna's house, but the usual courtyard of an Italian palace which, as we know from Goethe's "Italiänische Reise," was often treated as public property. The stage will therefore show part of an open court surrounded by colonnades; there will be the main door on to the street in the middle of the façade, a door at one side with a staircase leading to Donna Anna's apartments on the first floor, and perhaps on the other side a little wine-shop where the produce of the Commendatore's estates is on sale to all buyers. The action of the scene has already been described in the previous chapter.

Schnerich suggests that the cemetery should recall the tombs of the Scaligers at Verona, since equestrian statues are generally of bronze, and marble specimens like those mentioned are rare. This seems hardly reasonable, since the story belongs to a later period. But he is right in reminding us that Da Ponte indicates not one equestrian statue, but several. The usual practice is to place the Commendatore's horse at the back, facing the audience directly; this probably saves expense in constructing the animal, but it means that the Statue's all-important nod is practically lost. It would be much more effective to set the monument in profile, and this would enable Don Giovanni and Leporello to address their invitation to it without turning their backs on the audience.[1] This is the one scene in the opera in which it is admissible to aim at a certain effect of mystery, intensifying the incongruity of Don Giovanni's presence in such a place: not in order to give the audience a sense of impending tragedy, but to remind them that in those days it was only a very bold spirit who would not be rather frightened of going into any cemetery at night.

The next scene is a room in Donna Anna's house. Don Ottavio must be careful to suggest by his dress that he is only calling to give Donna Anna the latest news about Don Giovanni. His visit is not so unthinkable as some writers have imagined, supposing that when Don Giovanni says in the previous scene "ancor non sono due della notte," he means that it is not yet 2 A.M. Goethe's "Italiänische Reise"

[1] It would perhaps be better to say that it would allow them to address their invitation to the audience without turning their backs on the Statue.

will give us another useful piece of information about Da Ponte's Verona, namely, that when the poet's watch told him it was two in the morning, the town clocks were striking seven. "Due della notte" meant no more than two hours after dark, that is, about eleven at the very latest.

Don Giovanni's supper presents no complicated problems. He is sometimes given a few ladies to keep him company; but Schnerich amusingly points out that if there were ladies present, he would not be so ill-mannered as to talk to Leporello all the time. There might perhaps be a dancer or two, but certainly no other guests. The appearance of the Statue must be treated in a fairly matter-of-fact style. It is only on his disappearance that he may be permitted the illusion of a trap. From the same trap there will then rise fire and smoke, and the devils must not be forgotten, who will eventually drag Don Giovanni down to Hell. The practice of letting him sink down dead as the Commendatore clasps his hand is utterly alien to the spirit of the opera. It is true our views on the subject of Hell have changed somewhat during the last hundred and twenty years. Probably most of Gazzaniga's audiences did believe in the sort of Hell that the painters gave them—all fire and brimstone, populated by devils with horns, hoofs and tails. Nowadays that theory does not find very general acceptance. The pantomime devil is considered silly by sceptics and irreverent by the devout. But in the late eighteenth century Hell was sufficiently objective to be put on the stage, and sufficiently remote to be contemplated with pleasure. The Italian innate sense of cruelty—Italians are always children at heart—

naturally delighted in the spectacle of Don Giovanni being tortured by demons while singing a long aria; and the Italian temperament—again like a child—never quite sure how far its religion was pretence and how far real, would naturally love to see Leporello come out from under the table again to give a comic account of the whole affair, especially if his comedy was (as it is in Bertati's libretto) of a style unreproduceable to ears polite. We may note that in the most pompous grand opera of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the stock device of an incantation scene with the appearance of ghosts was frequently parodied by the comic characters in the *intermezzo* that followed directly afterwards.[1]

After Don Giovanni has disappeared there is no need to make the palace tumble down; visions of cemeteries and spectral ladies are of course quite out of the question. The room merely returns to its normal appearance, or, if preferred, it may remain in semi-darkness, to be illuminated again by the lights carried by Donna Anna's attendants.

There will no doubt be many to whom this simplified and common-sense version of Mozart's opera will appear little short of sacrilege. Still, the experiment was actually tried at Munich in 1896, although not precisely in the same manner which I have suggested. It has been the purpose of these chapters to demonstrate that "Don Giovanni" is nothing more or less than what its author and composer called it, a *dramma giocoso*, or in other words an *opera buffa*. Let it be noted that *opera buffa* does not mean the *opéra-bouffe* of Offenbach's day. It is a style of opera which is known to modern audiences only through Mozart,

[1] There is an example in Alessandro Scarlatti's "Tigrane."

with the possible conjunction of Rossini's "Il barbiere" and Donizetti's "L'elisir d'amore" and "Don Pasquale." Those who have studied the history of Italian opera in the eighteenth century will understand that "Don Giovanni" conforms throughout to the general style of that kind of opera, both structurally and musically, with the exception of a few scenes which introduced effects of a more sensational character.

The only argument that might reasonably be adduced in support of the tragic theory is that Mozart has obtained his supernatural effects by the use of trombones, which are altogether foreign to the character of comic opera. The point is a really important one, since it will come up again in connection with "Die Zauberflöte." The trombones in Mozart's time were only used for effects of a supernatural character. It is not quite correct to say that they are always associated with religion, for there is plenty of church music without them. But they appear on exceptionally solemn occasions, as in Mozart's Requiem, where they form the main background of tone, as they do in "Die Zauberflöte." In opera they are naturally used for such moments of supernormal solemnity as the utterances of the oracles in "Idomeneo" and "Alceste." We have no exact parallel to this in modern music. The trombones have become regular constituents of the ordinary orchestra; and so Wagner, when he wishes for extra solemnity, is obliged to employ an abnormally large number of them, or to mix them with various kinds of tubas. There are certain effects for a quartet of tenor and bass tubas in "Der Ring des Nibelungen," imitated very successfully also by Bruckner in his

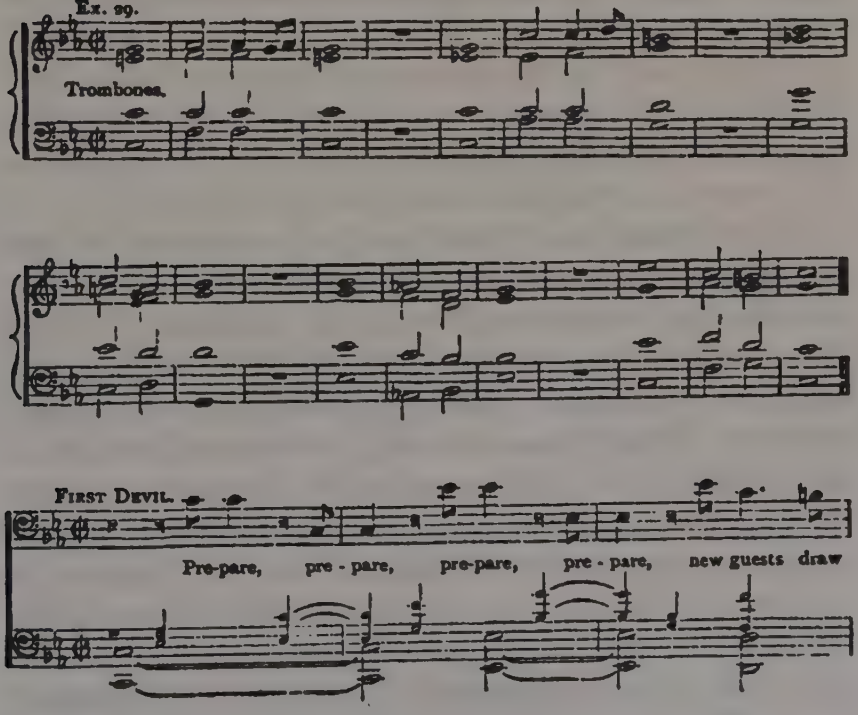
ninth symphony (slow movement), which do to some extent produce the same sort of supernormal impressiveness that we get from Mozart's trombones.

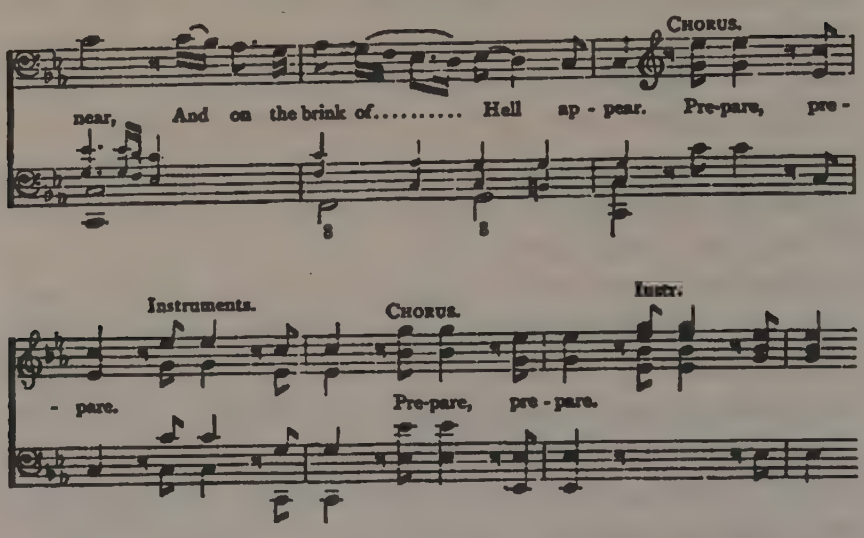
By the side of these effects we may consider the modern use of the organ in dramatic music. The organ is never used except for definitely religious or at any rate ecclesiastical effects. If we hear an organ in the theatre, we know there is a church in the neighbourhood. In certain operas, such as "Il trovatore," it may produce an impression of the deepest solemnity, even though we only have a few chords; in "Die Meistersinger," on the other hand, there is a most elaborate and realistic employment of the instrument which is not intended to do more than set us in the right frame of mind for a comic opera. Its principal function is to throw up the extremely irreverent behaviour in church of the hero and heroine.

It is more or less in this sense that we must take the trombones in "Don Giovanni." A glance at Purcell's music to "The libertine" will illustrate the same idea. Shadwell's last scene is laid inside a church; Don John and his boon companions Don Lopez and Don Antonio have accepted the Statue's invitation, and are received in the church by him (he has dismounted from his horse, which is also in view), with a large company consisting of the ghosts of all the characters whose death Don John has brought about. Don John, finding the Statue's hospitality rather meagre, as it consists only of blood, which is handed round in glasses, complains with scant courtesy. The Statue replies that there is further "treatment" in store for him. A "flourish" is then sounded, and after an interpolation from Don Antonio and Don

Lopez, a performance of music is given by some devils. This piece of music therefore corresponds more or less to the *concertino* of Gazzaniga's opera and the opera-tunes of Mozart's "Don Giovanni," except that in Shadwell's play it is the Statue's private band of musicians who supply the entertainment. The flourish is played by "Flatt trumpetts," which are understood to have been trombones of various sizes. The instruments which come in with the chorus are not named; they might be trombones, or perhaps only strings, as the "Trumpetts" are specially marked in a later place. As the score of "The libertine" is still unprinted, a short extract may be of interest.

Ex. 29.





Purcell's intention is evidently to produce an effect which will call up in his hearer's minds the associations of churches and funeral ceremonies; and a further light on his meaning is shown by the fact that in 1695 he used the "flourish" in a slightly simplified form for a march to accompany the funeral of Queen Mary II at Westminster Abbey.

The fact that Purcell's grisly strains do not represent the personality of the Statue, but merely a musical entertainment provided by him, shows us that we must not regard Mozart's trombones in too subjective a sense. When the Statue speaks in the cemetery they are on the stage, and they ought in all probability to be on or under the stage in the finale as well, though such an arrangement will not give pleasure to conductors. Like the organs in modern opera, they have a definitely local position; they are, it may be said, part of the scenery. If this principle be accepted, it will be easy to understand the different function that the trombones have in

"Die Zauberflöte," where their characteristic quality of tone is used not with a local and material but with a purely spiritual significance.

It only remains to sum up what has been said, and repeat that "Don Giovanni" is an opera for small theatres with modest resources; that although it is one of the most difficult operas to rehearse and to stage-manage, it must be produced on the principle of eliminating everything that is unnecessary, and reducing the stage picture to the simplest possible forms. There must be no attempt at allegorizing. Don Giovanni is not a superman, but a very agreeable young gentleman, who must be as charming to the audience as he is to everyone on the stage; Donna Anna is not a superwoman, but a hidalgo's daughter in whom family pride is the strongest of all passions. Elvira stands out in sharp contrast against her; she has no pride, and some people might say she has very little self-respect either. But she is undoubtedly the most important female character, and one might even call her the heroine, were it not that there is no heroine, since Don Giovanni himself must be our one and only hero. Zerlina and Masetto are simple peasants, with a mixture of *naïveté* and cunning—in Zerlina the first of these qualities is more apparent than real. Leporello and Ottavio are less easy to characterize: one is a stage *buffo*, the other a stage tenor. They are nothing more than the shadows of Don Giovanni and Donna Anna respectively. The Commendatore is simply a stage property like his own horse.

If "Don Giovanni" requires careful attention from all concerned in its production, so does it require equally careful attention on the other side of the

curtain. To most opera-goers it is probably no more than a succession of immortal tunes, to which they know the first four or five words in German or Italian, as the case may be, ending with a scene that is sufficiently serious to make them think that classical opera always has a sound moral influence. Of the recitative they know nothing; and those who will not take the trouble to read and enjoy Mozart's recitatives do not deserve the pleasure they derive from his arias. It is a poor compliment to a great composer to regard him merely as the purveyor of an evening's ear-tickling, and still worse to regard him as a classic to be reverenced—not profaned by critical investigation. We have got to train ourselves again into the habit of listening intelligently; and it is much less hard to listen intelligently to musical tragedy than to musical comedy. Those to whom music is the most real expression of human experience and the most habitual will understand the language of both forms of musical drama; those who only occasionally pass through the gate, or do not even do more than peep between its bars, however longingly, will feel that music is too strange, mysterious and overpowering to be associated with wit and humour. As with a foreign language, it is only those who are saturated with it who can fully enjoy its comedy and satire.

It is with this end in view that we must study "Don Giovanni." We can all of us enjoy a play in which brilliant wit and worldly wisdom are presented to us as the most important things in life, while emotional sensibility and moral rectitude are not perhaps trampled underfoot, but at any rate passed over with a humorous good-natured indulgence towards

such old-fashioned weaknesses; but most people are quite unaccustomed to look for an analogous view of human life in the world of music. Lamartine's comparison of "Don Giovanni" with Byron's "Don Juan" exhibits the error admirably: "Quelle différence entre la verve moqueuse, ironique, impie ou cynique du poète anglais, et la foi dans l'art sincère, convaincue, communicative et religieuse du musicien de Salzbourg! Le *Don Juan* du poète anglais n'est que la bouffonnerie du génie. Les notes du musicien ont vaincu d'avance les vers, comme l'âme croyante de Mozart a vaincu l'âme incrédule de Byron."[1]

If music is good, people take it seriously; if they want to laugh, they go and see a "musical comedy," but the music of it will only please them, not amuse them, though it may conceivably bore them. They can only see real humour in opera when it is given them in the form of a parody, designed to make them feel that opera is in itself essentially ridiculous. The early comic operas of Sullivan, especially "The Sorcerer," were so irresistibly funny that one cannot help forgiving the composer for the harm that he probably did to English opera by encouraging audiences to think that serious opera in English (if not in any language) could never be anything else than an absurdity; but it is infinitely more distressing to watch a modern audience listening to "The Sorcerer" and heartily enjoying it as serious music. The composer, however, knew his "Don Giovanni" as thoroughly as ever did Gounod or Rossini; and it seems as if a course of Mozart in English might be the best preliminary step towards educating our on-coming public to a really intelligent appreciation of Sullivan.

[1] *Cours familier de littérature.* Paris, 1858.

W. A. MOZART

From a contemporary miniature in oils by an unknown artist

CHAPTER XI

"COSÌ FAN TUTTE"

THE performance of "Don Giovanni" in Vienna brought Mozart neither fame nor money. He had received the appointment of court composer on the death of Gluck in the autumn of 1787; but the stipend seems to have been very inadequate to his needs as the father of a family, and he was still more hurt by the fact that the Emperor gave him hardly any opportunity of really earning it by new compositions. All that was required of him was a supply of dance music for the public masked balls given during the carnival season. He had a few pupils, but not enough to support his wants; in the summer of 1788 he wrote his three great symphonies, but the subscription concerts for which they were intended had to be postponed, and it is thought that they never took place at all.

In the spring of 1789 a welcome diversion presented itself in the shape of an invitation from Prince Carl Lichnowsky to join him on a visit to Berlin. The King of Prussia, Frederick William II, was an enthusiastic lover of music; he maintained a first-rate band, and was himself a very good violoncello player, so that there was a probability of Mozart's being able to turn his talent to good account at the northern court. On the way to Berlin, Mozart visited Leipzig, where he made friends with Doles, a pupil of J. S.

Bach, and his successor as Cantor of the Thomasschule. He gave an organ recital in the Thomaskirche, extemporizing on a chorale in such a way as to make Doles say that his old teacher had come to life again. By way of return Doles made the choir sing to him Bach's great eight-part motet "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied"; he was quite taken by surprise at the imposing effect of it, and cried out, "That's music that one can learn something from!" Learn something from it he did, for he made Doles fetch out Bach's other motets, although, no score being available, he had to study them from the parts spread out on a table before him. At Berlin his criticisms were a little too outspoken to meet with the approval of the musicians there; but the King showed a marked appreciation of his music, and offered him the post of Kapellmeister. He declined the invitation, not wishing to abandon Joseph II, although the Emperor's recognition of his abilities had been none too cordial. Joseph had a vigorous appetite for music, but was not very discriminating in his taste. Mozart's devotion to him was probably based not so much on his artistic interests as on the nobility and liberality of his character. Moreover, it is only natural to suppose that to a man of Mozart's temperament there would be little temptation to exchange the cheerful easy-going life of Vienna for the severer atmosphere of Berlin.

He returned home at the beginning of June, and set to work at once to write the series of six quartets that had been commissioned by the King of Prussia, as well as six pianoforte sonatas for his daughter, Princess Frederika. Only one of each set, however, was completed at this date, and the Princess seems

never to have received her remaining sonatas; of the King's quartets two more were written at a later date. The only other important work of this year is the clarinet quintet composed for Anton Stadler.

At the end of August "Figaro" was revived again, and its success was so definite that the Emperor decided to commission another opera from Mozart. He was not allowed to choose his own libretto this time; but he was at any rate given his old friend Da Ponte as a collaborator. This new opera was "Così fan tutte, ossia la scuola degli amanti"; it has been said that the subject was based on events that had actually taken place in Vienna shortly before, and that the Emperor had given a special command to Da Ponte to work the story into his libretto. The opera seems to have been written in great haste; the autograph score is very full of abbreviations, a proceeding not at all usual with Mozart. It has sometimes been alleged that Mozart disliked the subject and composed the music very much against his will; but there seems to be no authority for this tradition, and it is certainly the last deduction that one could possibly draw from internal evidence. The work was first performed on Jan. 26, 1790.

The plot of the opera is simplicity itself. Ferrando and Guglielmo are two young Neapolitan officers engaged to be married to two young ladies, Fiordiligi and her sister Dorabella. A cynical old bachelor, Don Alfonso by name, persuades the young men to put their mistresses' constancy to the test. They pretend to be called away from Naples on duty, but return that very afternoon disguised as Albanian noblemen. Don Alfonso, with the help of Despina, the ladies' maid, persuades the two sisters to receive

them. The strangers make violent love to them, and after some opposition each succeeds in winning the heart of his friend's betrothed. The affair proceeds, in fact, with such rapidity that a notary is called in that very evening to witness the marriage contract. Suddenly Don Alfonso announces the return of the soldiers; the Albanians vanish, and the terrified ladies are obliged to make confession to their original lovers. It is needless to say, however, that all ends happily.

This libretto has almost invariably been denounced as intolerably stupid, if not positively disgusting, and various attempts have been made in Germany to improve it, or even to provide Mozart's music with an entirely fresh libretto on a totally different subject.[1] There is not the least necessity for any such proceeding. "Così fan tutte" is as perfect a libretto as any composer could desire, though no composer but Mozart could ever do it justice. What Da Ponte did was to take an extremely simple idea as a foundation, an idea which in itself was absurd enough, but which had at any rate just the quality which he required. That quality was a certain stiff and conventional symmetry. There are three men and three women; one pair of philosophers, two pairs of lovers—the one sentimental, the other practical—six pieces of humanity which the poet can arrange in as many different patterns as he chooses. Starting on this skeleton of a plot, he builds up on it an artificial comedy. Those who know the opera only by vague recollections of a German translation, or the summary printed in those handbooks which are sold for the

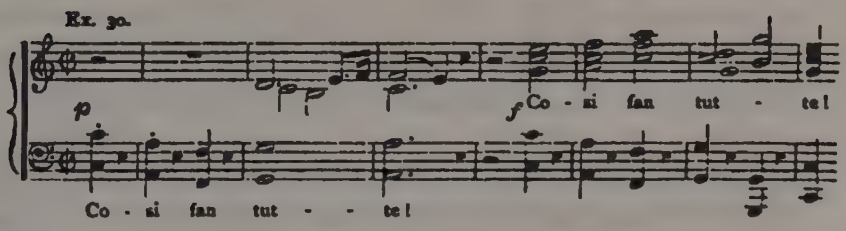
[1] MM. Barbier and Carré, the authors of the libretto of Gounod's "Faust," adapted Mozart's opera in 1863 to a French version of "Love's Labour's Lost."

benefit of lazy opera-goers, may well think it stupid, for they will only see the skeleton; to appreciate the delicate filigree of Da Ponte's comedy one must read every word of the original, and sing it through, recitatives and all, to Mozart's music.

The old-fashioned *opera buffa* presented stock types of singers, who sang stock types of songs. "Figaro" and "Don Giovanni," as we have seen, presented real individual characters, whose personality was reflected faithfully in the music. In "Così fan tutte" the case is a little different. There is only one character whom we can call real throughout, and that is Don Alfonso. The four lovers start by being purely conventional characters. They are utterly unreal; but as the opera develops, we see them expressing an amazingly wide range of emotions. This emotional range is in the other operas naturally much more restricted, because if it were not, we should easily lose sight of the individuality of the characters. It is just because they have no personality of their own that Fiordiligi and Ferrando, Guglielmo and Dorabella can exhibit themselves in such a number of different phases. They are only marionettes; but their machinery is so elaborate that they can act better than human beings. Don Alfonso, and to some extent Despina, in so far as they are real people, and not marionettes, stand outside the picture; indeed, Don Alfonso so obviously pulls all the strings that one begins to wonder if he is not really Don Lorenzo or Don Wolfgango. The opera therefore introduces us into a curious world, in which even the most ardent musician may find himself rather a stranger at first; for Don Alfonso, who is the only person really honest with himself, has no emotions,

and the four lovers, who are all emotion, are never quite clear how far their emotion is genuine and how far fictitious. Despina is simply the agent of Don Alfonso, so that her individuality is not of any great importance, although musically she adds a great charm to the opera.

The overture starts with a slow introduction, which gives us two characteristic ideas at once. The first is the theme given out by the oboes: the theme itself is of no great importance, but we shall find that the nasal tone of the oboe is almost always associated with cynical old Don Alfonso. The second point is the motto of the whole opera:—



which leads at once to the *allegro*, a lively chattering movement, full of strong contrasts between delicate solo passages and loud successions of tonic and sub-dominant chords for full orchestra. There is a certain appearance of conventionality about the themes, but every now and then we get some delightful touch of humour, as if the composer had wished to put Da Ponte's principle of construction from his own point of view. After the second subject has made its re-appearance in the tonic we hear the "così fan tutte" theme once more, and then a short *crescendo* on the principal subject makes a brilliant coda to the movement.

The curtain rises on a café, at which the two officers are sitting with Don Alfonso. He has evidently been saying something rather naughty about their young ladies, since each of them asserts in turn with great firmness that his particular bride is utterly incapable of falsehood. Don Alfonso wants to finish his breakfast in peace; but they tell him he must either prove his assertions or draw and defend himself. He is not going to be disturbed, and sits quietly smiling, while they start up, thump the table, and make the spoons rattle in the saucers. He hums an old song to them, flute and bassoon joining in with mocking laughter:—

> "Woman's faith is like the Phoenix
> In remote Arabia dwelling;
> Travellers oft such tales are telling—
> Have they seen it? No, not they!"

"What proof have you," he asks, "of their fidelity?" "Their promises, their vows, their protestations." "Ah yes! their tears and sighs, their kisses and their fainting fits. Oh! let me have my laugh out!" Very well, he will prove to them that their ladies are no better than any others, and stakes a hundred guineas on it, so long as they will promise to keep the bet a secret from the ladies, and carry out all his instructions obediently for twenty-four hours. They give their word, and begin to think what they will do with the money; for they have of course no doubt about winning it. Trumpets and drums ring out a couple of bars of introduction, and Ferrando the ardent sings confidently that he will spend the hundred guineas on a serenade for Dorabella. Guglielmo is less poetically-minded; he means to give a dinner-party. "And

shall you invite me?" asks Don Alfonso politely. Of course they will, both of them; they are not going to quarrel with him, and they will all drink Cupid's health together. And so off they go, arm in arm, the two young men in high spirits, and Don Alfonso smiling in his dry old way. He finds this sort of thing very rejuvenating.

The scene changes to a garden leading down to the sea. In the background is the bay, with Vesuvius in the distance. The clarinets in thirds, hypocritical and voluptuous, tell us that the ladies are here. Each has a portrait in her hand—did any one ever look so dashing as Ferrando, so distinguished as Guglielmo? The sentimental slow movement quickens up to an *allegro* of vows and protestations, interrupted only when the word "Amore" makes them both collapse into the exquisite raptures of a slow simultaneous *cadenza*. It is a fine morning, and both of them feel rather inclined for an adventure—but who comes here? Don Alfonso? Yes, but alone, and evidently in a state of great perturbation. "What is the matter? Ferrando—" "Guglielmo—" "Oh, 'tis too dreadful," answers Don Alfonso, recitative gliding insensibly into aria, and his broken phrases becoming almost melody against the background of sobbing violins and sighing violas. The ladies are in the last agonies of fear—and curiosity, for Don Alfonso continues to tell them to bear up and prepare for the worst, without letting out too soon what the horrible news is. He breaks it to them at last, and the officers come in themselves, dressed for their journey to the seat of war.

Here Mozart, as might be expected, sums up the situation in a quintet. The gentlemen approach

with dignified hesitation, and Don Alfonso draws attention to their manliness and courage. The ladies are more agitated, and desire their lovers instantly to draw their swords and run them through, since they cannot bear to live without them. Ferrando and Guglielmo dig Don Alfonso in the ribs. "Wait and see," he remarks, unmoved; and at that moment the two ladies, having done their duty by their emotions, settle down to one of Mozart's enchanting *sotto voce* ensembles, in which the others join, to point out the cruelty of fate and the vanity of human hopes, returning for just a moment to try the effect of more violent protestations, while the men once more nudge each other and laugh at Don Alfonso, enigmatical and smiling. A few more tears, an embrace, consolation in a comical double recitative, followed by a little duet, deliberately rather dry—but if the young officers are not very emotional, it shows how brave they must be. A drum is heard in the distance, Don Alfonso sees the boat approaching; the ladies prepare to faint, while the regiment crosses the stage to a swaggering march, followed by a crowd of people singing, "Oh, a soldier's life for me!" The boat is waiting, but the ladies know no end to their farewells, which culminate in a little quintet of the most exquisite beauty and humour, the four lovers embracing tenderly to long-drawn rapturous phrases, while Don Alfonso is shaking with laughter in the background. The march is repeated, and the officers embark; the ladies and Don Alfonso wave a last good-bye, singing a little trio to the accompaniment of rippling violins as the boat recedes into the distance. The scene ends with a short monologue for Don Alfonso. "What

grimaces! what silly nonsense! was it for these women that they wagered a hundred guineas?" He is quite stirred up, and becomes almost passionate as he pours out his contempt for women in an accompanied recitative; then as he reaches his climax the orchestra plays its two conventional chords, he taps his snuff-box and goes in.

The next scene shows us the ladies' boudoir. Despina, the maid, has brought their chocolate, and thinks she may as well taste it before they come in. Here they are—"Chocolate? No! give me poison!" "Shut the windows! pull down the blinds! I hate the light, I hate everything—oh, go away and leave me alone!" It is thus that Dorabella leads off, in an accompanied recitative of the most absurdly tragic order, followed by an agitated aria, in which she declares that she intends to go mad for the rest of her life and show the Eumenides themselves how to scream; she does in fact give them a delightful sample of her abilities, starting on a high G flat, and slowly descending a chord of the diminished seventh by way of *cadenza*, while the fiddles wait politely, and then finish off the song with their delicate wriggling sextolets over the conventional closing harmonies.

Despina is quite accustomed to tantrums by this time, and asks what is the matter. "Our lovers have left Naples!" says agonized Fiordiligi. "Is that all?" laughs Despina; "they'll come back." "But they've gone to the war!" sobs Dorabella. "So much the better for them: they'll be covered with glory." "But perhaps they'll be killed!" shrieks Fiordiligi. "So much the better for you, then; you can find fresh ones—there's no shortage of nice

young men in this world." The ladies are furious. "Oh, they're all alike," says Despina. "You love one man now, you'll love another presently; one's as good as another, because none of them are good for anything. Well, I dare say they'll come back; still as long as they're away, don't waste your time crying, but see if you can't—amuse yourselves." This is really quite shocking. "Nonsense!" says Despina, "aren't you out of the nursery yet? Do you suppose that Signor Ferrando and Signor Guglielmo are not doing just the same thing? Why, they're men! they're soldiers!" and she goes off into a fit of giggles, as the ladies gather up their skirts and leave the room.

Enter Don Alfonso to pay a call of condolence. "No one at home? Ah, there's Despina; h'm, maids are such mischief-makers. Well, a guinea will do a good deal." Don Alfonso has brought with him two Albanian noblemen who wish to pay their respects to the ladies; Despina is quite ready to admit them. Don Alfonso presents the strangers, and she looks them up and down; their clothes and beards are rather odd, but then these Orientals are all as rich as Crœsus.[1] The ladies have heard her laughing, and call to her with angry voices. She does not come, and the ladies enter in a fine state of temper at having their mid-day siesta disturbed. "Strangers in the house? You shameless hussy, send them away this minute, or we shall give you notice on the spot." The gentlemen fall on their knees, and crave pardon with florid compliments. Don Alfonso watches from

[1] Da Ponte's original intention was to lay the scene of the opera at Trieste, where the appearance of magnates from the Balkans in national costume would not be anything unthinkable.

behind the door. The ladies are at first indignant, then a little frightened, but they gradually find that oriental imagery has a certain charm about it. As the sextet ends, Don Alfonso comes forward as if he had just entered the room. What is all this noise? Do the ladies wish to rouse the whole neighbourhood? "Look! men in the house!" Well, why not? and he looks round. "Heavens! am I dreaming? My dear friends, my very dearest friends! How ever did you come here? This is too delightful! (Come, act up to me!)" They are presented properly, and continue their extravagant compliments. Dorabella is almost inclined to be agreeable; but Fiordiligi is an elder sister who always does the correct thing. She has had the advantage of a sound old-fashioned education, and knows that when strange men misbehave in this manner, a well-bred operatic heroine always sings an aria about rocks and tempests, with a pompous introduction, wide leaps from high notes to low and back, plenty of *coloratura*, and a long shake at the cadence. It is all very well done, for was not Fiordiligi acted by Madame Ferrarese del Bene, with a compass that might be envied by any soprano, and by any contralto as well? In vain Don Alfonso begs her to be kind, in vain Guglielmo assumes a cheerful air; the ladies retire again, and the two officers burst out into loud guffaws. Don Alfonso tells them not to make so much noise, and reminds them that he who laughs last laughs longest. This laughing trio is one of the most amusing numbers in the opera. Would Don Alfonso like to strike a bargain, and be let off with five-and-twenty guineas and an apology? He reminds them that time is not yet up, and that they have promised to obey him for twenty-four

hours. After a beautiful song ("Un' aura amorosa") from sentimental Ferrando they leave the stage to Don Alfonso, who has another interview with Despina. Despina is still unaware of the identity of the Albanians, and Don Alfonso keeps his secret; but she is quite ready to help, and indeed has a plan of her own. She understands how to manage her ladies. Love indeed! what's love? "Pleasure, amusement, pastime, diversion, merriment; if it becomes tiresome, it's not love any longer!"

The next scene begins the finale. The ladies have gone into the garden to take the air, and pour out their woes to the midges, as Despina says. Very prettily indeed they pour them out in a little duet, while flutes and bassoons echo each other with delicate runs in thirds. Suddenly there are two simultaneous cries of agony; the strangers rush on in a great state of excitement, with Don Alfonso panting behind. Each carries a bottle, and before the philosopher can catch them up, each has drunk his fatal dose. "Have they really poisoned themselves?" ask the ladies. Yes, they really have poisoned themselves, Don Alfonso tells them, and there is nothing to do apparently but to go on singing a quintet until the poison takes effect. Gradually the sense of horror deepens—a triplet figure on the violins half recalls the death of the Commendatore; a hard harmony reminds us of Donna Anna. The phrases become more broken, and finally Ferrando and Guglielmo fall writhing on the grass. "Won't you be kind to them even now?" asks Don Alfonso. The ladies' answer is a shriek for Despina, who tells them to look after the suicides while she and Don Alfonso go for a doctor. The ladies dare not approach at first,

and the two officers seize the opportunity to express their amusement in a quiet aside. But the poison must take its course; it is about time for a good groan. This brings off its effect. The sisters look at one another and hesitate. Fiordiligi, always correct, considers that it would be wrong to leave them at such a moment. Dorabella, who is more human, thinks they are very good-looking. And so they draw nearer and nearer, while Mozart develops his two characteristic themes through various keys; they even feel the patients' pulses, and realize that the case is serious unless help comes soon, as the music mounts to a cry. The men remark *sotto voce* that the ladies are becoming a little more tame at last, and the ladies, also *sotto voce*, acknowledge that the occasion is quite a suitable one for a few tears. Don Alfonso interrupts the quartet briskly by introducing the doctor—a pompous old gentleman in the largest of spectacles and the most voluminous of white wigs. Donna Elvira, said Leporello, talked like a printed book; this personage talks like a prescription. But the patients think they have heard that squeaky little voice before, and control their laughter as best they can. The doctor makes elaborate inquiries of the ladies, and reassures them in his best professional manner; finally he draws from beneath his flowing robes (was that Despina's apron that we just caught sight of beneath them?) a magnet, for he is a disciple of the great Doctor Mesmer himself.[1] He strokes the patients with it, and we hear the mysterious fluid pass along their bodies in the prolonged shakes of flutes, oboes

[1] It will be remembered that Dr. Mesmer had been an intimate friend of the Mozart family; it was in his garden that "Bastien und Bastienne" was first performed.

and bassoons. They begin to twitch, and to guard against possible convulsions the doctor directs the ladies to hold their heads. They look round, they recover strength—ah! this is something like a doctor!

Slowly they rise to their feet. "Are these the Elysian fields? are those Pallas and Cytherea that we see before us?" They recognize the ladies, and seize their hands with fervour. The ladies must not be frightened, says the doctor: these are only the after-effects of the poison; the virtues of animal magnetism will restore them to complete health in an hour or two. The "after-effects," however, are still strong for the present, and the gentlemen positively demand a kiss in so many words—"Heavens! a kiss!" This was premature, and the ladies' feelings are outraged. People must behave properly even if they have been poisoned, says Fiordiligi. Whether the kiss is given or not, Da Ponte does not tell us; but the mixture of indignation and amusement provides Mozart with an excellent *strepitoso*, *arcistrepitoso*, *strepitosissimo* on which to bring down the curtain.

It is a long first act, and takes about an hour and a half in performance; but no one could ever feel tired of listening to it, for Mozart has poured out an unceasing flow of the most exquisite music. Cimarosa seems to have been his model on this occasion; his "Giannetta e Bernardone," produced originally at Venice in 1781 and performed at Vienna in 1785, has much affinity to the style of Mozart's opera.[1] Mozart, as usual, has infinitely surpassed his model, both in melody and instru-

[1] This was pointed out to me by Professor Max Friedlaender. Cimarosa's opera is published in a modern vocal score by Ricordi, having been revived at Florence in 1870.

mentation, although "Così fan tutte" is written in a much simpler vein than either "Figaro" or "Don Giovanni." At the same time the style of the music, in spite of being less complex, is very definitely later in its essential qualities. There are innumerable moments in the opera at which we are reminded not so much of Mozart as of the young Beethoven, especially in the pseudo-tragic episodes, which often recall the septet or the early pianoforte sonatas and trios. It is interesting and amusing to note that while Beethoven was taking Mozart seriously and putting his whole heart into his subconscious imitations of him, Mozart himself was laughing at his own emotionalism.

The second act opens in the ladies' boudoir. They are still rather indignant, Fiordiligi especially, but Despina patiently continues inculcating her lessons in philosophy. Some day, she says, they will thank her for her good advice. When she is out of the room, the sisters discuss the matter from a more practical standpoint. Fiordiligi hesitates to take any responsibility, but Dorabella, who has begun to feel very much bored with all this rigid propriety, induces her to give way, and in a little duet they agree to receive the attentions of the noble strangers. Dorabella will take the dark one, who is more gay and amusing; Fiordiligi the fair one, whose sentimental style appeals to her taste. As they discuss the possibilities of the affair they grow more lively, and by the end of the duet they have not only recovered their former spirits, but are quite prepared for exciting adventures. We note that in this duet they are accompanied not by the sentimental clarinets, but by Don Alfonso's oboes.

Here is Don Alfonso himself, also in a great state of excitement; the ladies must come into the garden at once to listen to the music. The scene changes to the garden; at the back of the stage is a boat, gaily dressed with flowers, and in the boat Ferrando and Guglielmo with a band of musicians. The soft, warm notes are heard of clarinets, horns, and bassoons; Ferrando and Guglielmo join in, and as the song is taken up by the chorus, they step ashore and present themselves to the ladies as slaves wearing chains of flowers. The ladies are quite overcome; the gentlemen appear to be equally embarrassed. Don Alfonso explains—it is their apology for the morning's indiscretion. "Let us have no more old-fashioned airs and graces," he says; "shake hands, and let us all be good friends." Despina gives the ladies' answer: the gentlemen are to break their flowery chains, and offer their arms to the two sisters. They do so, not without awkwardness and embarrassment on both sides, while Despina and Don Alfonso run away laughing.

The two couples begin with polite remarks about the weather and the garden. Fiordiligi suggests a walk in one of the avenues, and Ferrando is only too delighted to oblige her. Guglielmo seizes the opportunity to press his suit on Dorabella, who does not require much persuasion to accept from him a little golden heart, which he even hangs round her neck in the place of Ferrando's portrait. They sing their duet, and make room for the other couple. Ferrando has not been so successful; Fiordiligi rushes back from the avenue in a great state of perturbation. Yet it is only a passing storm; Ferrando's ardent speeches can make her turn and look at him, can

even draw a sigh from her. But he does not press her; he only gives vent to his ardour in a rapturous aria (need I say that the clarinets are prominent?) and leaves her to think it over. Fiordiligi is tormented by a conscience. She admits to herself in the recitative that she is in love with the stranger; but she still feels a duty to her absent lover. She apostrophizes him in an aria. "Forgive the error of this loving heart; the knowledge of it shall at least remain hidden in the shadow of this garden, never revealed, except to these flowers." The aria is a rondo of great beauty, scored with inimitable grace. There are very elaborate parts for two horns, perhaps intended by Mozart as a joke in the same sense as the well-known flourish of the horns at the end of Figaro's aria "Aprite un po' quegli occhi."

A very amusing dialogue follows between Ferrando and Guglielmo. Ferrando is overjoyed at being able to show that Fiordiligi is constancy itself to her Guglielmo; but Guglielmo finds it a little inconvenient to tell Ferrando what has happened in the case of his Dorabella. Ferrando is distracted, but he bears Guglielmo no ill-will, and asks his advice. Guglielmo is already half-converted to Don Alfonso's philosophy, as Dorabella is to Despina's. Women are charming creatures, he says, but they must not be surprised if their lovers complain of the liberality with which they distribute their favours—this is the burden of his song, which in its frank Italian *buffo* style closely resembles Masotto's air in "I due litiganti" quoted in Ex. 17.

Ferrando takes his case rather seriously. He is still genuinely in love with Dorabella, in spite of the way she has treated him. This is one of the airs

which remind us of early Beethoven. Mozart has for once in a way employed both clarinets and oboes together in the accompaniment, so that neither pair of instruments seems to have any special dramatic significance. The aria is very neatly constructed, on two short but strongly contrasted subjects, the first in C minor, the second appearing for the first time in E flat with clarinets, and then at the return being transposed to C major, when it is accompanied by the oboes with the most delicious effect, the whole orchestra joining in afterwards for a coda.

Once more we are admitted to the ladies' apartments. Fiordiligi is still in great distress. She confesses frankly that she is in love with her Albanian, but is shocked at Dorabella's matter-of-fact acceptance of her statement. She will make a last effort to conquer her passion. "My dear," says Dorabella, "you had much better give way to it;" and she expounds her philosophy in an aria, which naturally resembles Despina's to some extent, but is yet cleverly differentiated from it.

Fiordiligi is left alone. Suddenly she makes up her mind, and sends Despina to fetch two old uniforms of Ferrando and Guglielmo. (How they come to be in the ladies' wardrobe Da Ponte does not explain.) She and Dorabella will put them on, and will go out to the war themselves; it is the only way to escape temptation. She tears off her *toupé*, little knowing that through the open door Don Alfonso, Ferrando and Guglielmo are watching her, and puts on her lover's hat and cloak. Ferrando, still disguised, steps in to restrain her. Has she forgotten him? She protests; he presses, until finally her strength of mind gives way, and she yields com-

pletely, in as naïve and simple a phrase as that in which Gluck's Alceste makes her great sacrifice.[1] Guglielmo is on the point of bursting in, but Don Alfonso pulls him back, though he must have hard work to hold him during the long *allegro* in which Ferrando and Fiordiligi give expression to their transports.

Is this really our cheery philosophical Guglielmo? Ferrando has touched him on a tender spot, and when he comes back again for congratulations on his conquest finds his friend in a very bad temper. "Fiordiligi? Fior di diavolo!" They are both agreed, however, that the two ladies must be severely punished. "Very well," suggests Don Alfonso, "marry them." Marry them? They would as soon marry the devil's grandmother. Then will they remain bachelors for life? "Do you suppose men like us will ever want for wives?" Oh, there are plenty of women in the world, says the philosopher, but will any others be any better? They are still in love with these particular ladies, it seems, in spite of their faithlessness; they had better stick to them. "People speak ill of women because they change their lovers twenty times a day; I forgive them. Some say it is a vice, others a habit—I say it is their necessity; and if a lover finds himself tricked, he has only himself to blame, for, young or old, ugly or beautiful, all are women—*così fan tutte!*" And as they join with him in chorus—"Così fan tutte!"—enter Despina, as usual extremely pleased with herself, to say that the ladies are prepared to marry them at once, that they have sent for a notary to come

[1] "Je volerai remplir un devoir qui m'est cher"—the three bars immediately preceding "Divinités du Styx."

this very evening, and that they will be ready to start for Albania in three days.

The final scene shows us a saloon in the ladies' house, lit up for a party. Despina is ordering the servants about, and Don Alfonso looks in to see that all is in order. The two couples enter, with all Posillipo come to congratulate them. The quartet receive their good wishes with due acknowledgments to the valuable assistance rendered by Despina, and after the chorus have left the room sit down to supper. They drink to each other and drown their memory of the past in a graceful "round," such as Padre Martini himself might have written—Guglielmo alone standing out and wishing he could poison the wretches. Don Alfonso introduces the notary, who is, of course, none other than the versatile Despina. The contract is read over, and presented for signature. The two ladies have just appended their names when—was that a drum? and those voices in the distance, are they singing "Oh, a soldier's life for me"? Don Alfonso goes to the window—yes, the soldiers are coming back, the boat has reached the shore, the two officers are getting out! What is to be done? The new bridegrooms are hastily bundled into another room, and while Don Alfonso consoles the ladies, slip out again unobserved to reach the main door. A moment later Ferrando and Guglielmo enter in uniform; the king has just given orders for them to return at once. The ladies seem silent and uncomfortable, but perhaps that is due to excess of joy. Suddenly Guglielmo discovers the notary and demands an explanation. Despina takes off her wig and explains that she has just come back from a masquerade. The ladies are still more em-

barrassed. Don Alfonso discreetly drops the marriage contract where Ferrando can pick it up. Indignation boils over; wicked Don Alfonso tells the officers to look into the next room. The ladies are in agony, when their lovers return wearing their Albanian dresses all awry, and recall the words and music of the previous tender episodes, with a jest at the magnetic doctor. Explanations are fortunately unnecessary, and all the ladies can do is to throw the blame on that odious Don Alfonso. Don Alfonso takes it all very cheerfully, puts their hands together, and recommends them to make peace. The opera ends with an ensemble in which the six characters give the audience the excellent advice always to let their actions be guided by reason, and always to look at life with a sense of humour.

Whether the ladies pair off with their original lovers or their new ones is not clear from the libretto, but, as Don Alfonso says, it will not make any difference to speak of.

It has been impossible in this sketch of the opera to do justice to Da Ponte's sprightly dialogue or to Mozart's incomparable recitatives. Don Alfonso's part is in fact almost all recitative, apart from the ensembles. He never sings a real aria at all, but his recitatives, especially that in Act I, where he bribes Despina to help in his plan, are full of humour, with numberless little expressive figures in the bass, and at moments of more importance pass almost unnoticed into *recitativo stromentato*, rising sometimes even to measured declamatory movements, such as "Vorrei dir" in Act I or "Tutti accusan le donne" in Act II. The first of these is indeed called an aria, but it is too short and fragmentary to deserve

the name. How essentially inseparable it is from the plain recitative that precedes and follows it is made only too painfully obvious at performances where recitative is abandoned in favour of spoken dialogue. Of all Mozart's three great comedies it is "Così fan tutte" which can least endure the substitution of dialogue for recitative, for such a proceeding breaks the opera up into a series of fragmentary little arias and ensembles, drawing too much attention to their slightness, and completely altering their emotional values, especially when they were intended by the composer to grow directly out of the recitative.

"Figaro"—Beaumarchais' "Figaro" at any rate—was called a prologue to the Revolution, and "Don Giovanni" presented the same kind of ideas at a rather different angle; it was an opera for heedless pleasure-loving aristocrats dancing on the crust of a volcano.[1] These two operas came out before the fateful year 1789. "Così fan tutte" in January 1790 must have seemed a last jest at the departing age, to those who understood the humour of it. To a later generation, unaccustomed to look for humour of this kind in music, it must have been merely the apotheosis of the *rococo* in its most frivolous and superficial aspect.

With "Così fan tutte" we bid farewell to Lorenzo da Ponte as Mozart's librettist, and the reader may like to know what became of this curious and fascinating character. The death of Joseph II in February 1790 left him without a protector. His enemies were too strong for him, and the result of intrigue and calumny was that he was obliged to take flight

[1] This was well pointed out by O. G. Sonneck in an article entitled "La nuova rappresentazione del Don Giovanni di Mozart a Monaco" (*Rivista Musicale Italiana*, Turin, 1896).

to Trieste, glad to escape from Vienna with his life, as we learn from the verses in which he dedicates to Byron his translation of the English poet's "Prophecy of Dante." At Trieste he made the acquaintance of an English merchant, and fell violently in love with his daughter, whose name was Nancy. Nancy had been asked in marriage by an Italian who was in business at Vienna, but the suitor demanded too big a dowry, and the father, furious at the idea of giving his daughter to a man who only wanted her money, handed her over to Da Ponte. Nancy was a Protestant, and Lorenzo a Catholic priest, so that their union could not be legalized; but the girl's family seemed to regard the matter with perfect equanimity. He left Trieste with Nancy in August 1792, with the idea of seeking his fortune in Paris. Casanova, whom he visited in Prague, recommended him to go to London instead, and gave him two pieces of good advice: "When you are in London, never set foot inside the Italian café, and never sign your name to anything." At Spires the news which reached him of the Revolution decided him to change his mind and go to London, where after some misfortunes he was able, through a sister of Nancy, to obtain the post of poet to the Italian Opera. On March 1, 1794, Bertati's "Don Giovanni" was given there, with music put together from Sarti, Gazzaniga and others, Mozart even being represented by Leporello's catalogue-aria. In 1797 Da Ponte was sent to Italy to engage singers, and seized the opportunity to revisit his old home at Ceneda. He gives a delightful account of the episode in his autobiography: Lamartine wrote of it, "Même dans les confidences de Saint Augustin, si tendre et pieux pour sa mère, il

n'y a pas beaucoup de pages en littérature intime supérieures à ce retour d'un fils aventurier dans la maison paternelle." He came back to London, where he suffered curious vicissitudes of fortune. His inexperience seems to have been taken advantage of by Taylor, the manager of the Haymarket, and by Messrs. Corri and Dussek, the composers and music-publishers with whom he went into partnership; and in 1805 he found it advisable to fly from his creditors and make his escape to America. For the details of his life there the reader must be referred to Mr. H. E. Krehbiel's *Music and Manners in the Classical Period* (London, 1898). It must suffice here to say that he settled in New York about 1807, and taught Italian for several years; he made occasional incursions into business ventures which invariably ended in failure, but generally recovered his position by returning to his pupils. The great event of his American life was the visit of Garcia to New York in 1825, with an opera company which performed "Don Giovanni"—Mozart's this time. In 1832, when he was eighty-three years of age, he lost his Nancy. It was about this time that he entered into correspondence with the Patriarch of Venice, who had previously been Bishop of Ceneda. He sent the Patriarch some poems, and received a kindly letter of thanks, in which the worthy prelate begged him to reconcile himself with the Church. His old friend Michele Colombo added his entreaties, and Da Ponte seems to have undergone during his last years, which were none too happy, a change in his religious opinions. He died on August 17, 1838, in his ninetieth year, having made his confession and received extreme unction. A document quoted by

one of his biographers, Monsignor Bernardi,[1] from the ecclesiastical archives of New York, says that since it was not generally known that Da Ponte was a priest, it was considered advisable not to draw attention to the fact either on the occasion of his reconciliation with the Church or on that of his funeral.

[1] Jacopo Bernardi, *Memorie di Lorenzo da Ponte*, Florence, 1871.

CHAPTER XII

"DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE" AND "LA CLEMENZA DI TITO"

The death of Joseph II in February put an end to Mozart's hopes as a court composer. The new Emperor, Leopold II, cared little for music, and only supported it as a matter of duty. Besides, he had no sympathy with the ideals of his predecessor, and anybody who had enjoyed the protection of Joseph might be certain of Leopold's disfavour. Discarded by the Emperor, Mozart set out on a concert tour; he still enjoyed a considerable celebrity as a virtuoso on the pianoforte, and was certain of appreciation in the smaller German capitals. But his concerts brought him in no profits, and he returned to Vienna to find matters only worse than he had left them. His chamber music was beyond his audiences; the number of his pupils had dwindled to two; his wife was in chronic ill-health, and his finances in the most desperate condition. The state of his own health probably had something to do with the fact that his whole output for 1790 amounted to no more than two string quartets and some additional accompaniments to works of Handel.

He took up composition again after his tour, and was occupied in the early part of 1791 with a number of works, most of them small and of very miscellaneous character. It was early in May that he received

an invitation to compose what must to him have seemed an almost more unusual type of work than the pieces for clock-work instruments that had just been occupying his thoughts, and one, too, that was even less likely to bring him adequate remuneration. The proposal came from an actor-manager, by name Emanuel Schikaneder, who had made friends with Mozart when acting at Salzburg eleven years before. Born at Regensburg in 1751 in the most miserable circumstances, he had spent his childhood as an itinerant fiddler; later he became an actor, and although devoid of education, had sufficient natural talent to achieve a decided success by the time he was twenty-four. At twenty-seven he was manager of a company of his own, touring South Germany and Austria with a repertory that included "King Lear," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," Schiller's "Fiesko," Lessing's "Emilia Galotti," and Gluck's "Orpheus," as well as popular patriotic pieces, ballets, spectacular entertainments, and German comic operas, some of which he composed himself. He was a capable manager, very popular with his subordinates, a passably good singer, and clever enough to see that an energetic appeal to German national sentiment was a sure road to success at a time when his countrymen were getting tired of the tyranny of French and Italian taste and preparing gradually for the romantic outburst of the early nineteenth century. He gave a season of German "Singspiel" (comic opera) at Vienna in the winter of 1784–5, often patronized by the Emperor; a season mainly of patriotic and spectacular pieces, interspersed with comic operas, at Regensburg in 1787; and in 1789 came back to Vienna to begin a long series of successes at the "Theater im

Starhembergischen Freihause auf der Wieden," a flimsy erection which had been run up in one of the numerous courtyards of what is still called the "Freihaus," a huge block of low yellow buildings to the south of the Naschmarkt. In those days it was, of course, outside the fortifications of the city, being just on the right hand of the road as one left the Kärntnerthor.

After the collapse of German opera that followed Mozart's "Entführung," Joseph had reinstated Italian opera at court; but the people of Vienna were only too glad to support some sort of popular musical drama in their own language. One Marinelli had obtained considerable success with comic operas, burlesques, fairy plays, and topical pieces during the last eight years; and Schikaneder, having seen what the public wanted, set himself to beat Marinelli at his own trade. He began with simple "Singspiel," but soon saw that what drew the largest audiences were operas on oriental subjects and romantic fairy-tales, in both of which the local Viennese comic character "Kasperl" or one of his tribe could be introduced. His first "magic opera" was "Der Stein der Weisen" (September 1790), adapted from Wieland, with music by various composers, including Mozart, who contributed a song and an amusing duet in which the soprano does nothing but mew like a cat. For the next year he had already secured Wranitzky's "Oberon," and he now came to Mozart with the offer of a similar kind of libretto.

Mozart accepted it. It is difficult to imagine what process of thought led him to do so. It was hardly dignified for a musician who had been constantly associated with court life at Vienna and else-

where, both as composer and pianist, to undertake to collaborate in a fairy play to be acted in what was little more than a wooden barn, to an audience that only cared for trivial and vulgar melody, "gag" and "business" of the silliest kind, crude spectacular effects, and the introduction of a whole menagerie of animals on the stage. On the other hand, he had been insultingly neglected by the new Emperor, and had practically no hope of reinstatement; for years he had been passionately desirous of writing a German opera, and this chance might well be better than none. His sister-in-law, Josefa Hofer, belonged to Schikaneder's company; Schikaneder himself was an old friend, and the type of friend who knew how to make the most of friendship. There was yet another reason: Schikaneder and Mozart were both Freemasons, and we shall eventually see that this was very probably the most cogent reason of all.

Concerning the history of the next few months there is a mass of legend and tradition, and a scarcity of well-authenticated facts. Time was pressing, and Schikaneder well knew how difficult it was to induce Mozart to write anything down. But fortune favoured him; Mozart's wife was taking the waters at Baden near Vienna during June and July, and the composer was left alone without even a servant.[1] Schikaneder provided him with a summer-house[2] in the courtyard where the theatre was erected, in which he could work with the manager's eye always upon him, and

[1] "J'ai congedié Leonore, et je serai tout seul à la maison, ce que n'est pas agréable," he writes to his wife on June 6. Why this letter was written in French does not appear.

[2] The summer-house remained in position till the middle of the last century, when it was transported to Salzburg, and erected on the Capuzinerberg.

kept up his spirits at other times by encouraging him to share in his own riotous and profligate manner of life. The opera was finished in the rough in the course of July, and rehearsals for the singers had already begun.

Two new commissions interrupted the course of "Die Zauberflöte" (The magic flute), as the new opera was to be called.

It was in July that a mysterious messenger presented Mozart with an anonymous letter inviting him to compose a Requiem Mass, and to name his own price for it. He accepted the offer, as he was anxious to show the world what he could do in the ecclesiastical style, now that Leopold II had reinstated the church orchestras which Joseph had abolished. In August came another invitation, of a more pressing character. The Emperor was to be crowned King of Bohemia at Prague on September 6, and the local authorities decided at the last moment to celebrate the occasion with an opera by Mozart. The libretto chosen was an old one of Metastasio's, remodelled for the occasion, "La clemenza di Tito"—a pompous and frigid drama of Roman history such as had been fashionable in court circles half a century earlier. Mozart was obliged to set off at once for Prague, accompanied by his wife and his pupil Süssmayr, composing in the carriage, and writing out his ideas with Süssmayr's assistance wherever they stopped for the night. The opera was finished in eighteen days, rehearsed, and finally performed with all possible magnificence after the coronation banquet. It was a complete failure.

"La clemenza di Tito" later on may almost be said to have achieved popularity. It was repeated

at Prague, and much applauded; it was taken up at other theatres, and in spite of some very sharp criticism, it maintained its position in the German repertory well on into the nineteenth century. To English musicians it has the interest of having been the first opera by Mozart which was performed in London (1806).

Although it has occasionally been revived in recent years at Mozart festivals, it is, however, little suited to modern conditions. The story turns on the unfailing and therefore rather monotonous clemency of the Roman Emperor Titus. Vitellia, the daughter of the late Emperor Vitellius, being offended that Titus does not desire to make her his wife, induces his intimate friend Sextus to form a conspiracy against him, Sextus being madly in love with her, and wax in her hands. Titus is at present thinking of marrying his sister Servilia, but on finding that Servilia is in love with Sextus' friend Annius, performs his first act of clemency by giving her up to the object of her affections. He further decides to marry Vitellia after all, and sends his general Publius to inform her of his intentions. Publius arrives just too late; Vitellia has that very moment sent Sextus off to set fire to the Capitol and murder Titus. Sextus manages to perform the first part of his instructions, but is too nervous to kill Titus himself, and comes back to Vitellia. The first act ends with the burning of the Capitol, and the agitation of the principal characters, accompanied by the chorus.

At the opening of the second act we learn that Titus has escaped death, and has discovered the whole plot. Sextus confesses his guilt to Annius, and is advised to fly the country; Vitellia is also anxious to

get Sextus out of the way, since she knows that if Titus treats him with the inevitable clemency, he will probably confess everything and expose her. Publius comes to arrest Sextus, who is tried by the Senate and condemned to death. Titus has an interview with him, but he refuses to inculpate Vitellia, and is sent away to prison again, although Titus after some hesitation tears up the death warrant, which he had just signed. Vitellia, however, finally makes up her mind to confess her share in the plot, which she does with the usual dramatic effect in the amphitheatre, where Sextus and his fellow-conspirators are on the point of being thrown to the wild beasts. It is needless to say that Titus performs his third act of clemency and pardons everybody, so that the opera may end with general rejoicing.

Metastasio's drama, judged by the standards of his own day, was a good enough piece of work, and indeed contains a few scenes of great pathos. It was appropriate too as a coronation spectacle, for it was the idealization of beneficent despotism, and as long as the eighteenth-century ideas of monarchy survived, Mozart's opera might well receive encouragement in the court theatres of states which were yet untainted by the spirit of modern democracy, especially as its impressiveness would gain much by spectacular effects on a large scale.

From a musical standpoint, however, the drama was no longer practicable. Even "Idomeneo" contains many things which were foreign to the old type of opera; and in 1790 Mozart had moved a long way beyond "Idomeneo." The chief alterations made by Caterino Mazzolà for the Prague performance, apart from reducing Metastasio's three acts to two,

consisted in the insertion of duets, ensembles, and finales. What was Mozart's gain was Metastasio's loss; "the powerful opening scene between Sextus and Vitellia is fiddle-faddled into a duet; the rapid scene of the discovered conspiracy is drawn out into a quintet; the pathetic meeting of Sextus and Titus is fugued and twisted into a trio, and the exquisite outburst of Sextus' remorse is frittered away into a long rondo, in which he repeats a dozen times and to all sorts of tunes—'Tanto affanno soffre un core—nè si muore—di dolore.'"[1] The result of this conflict of styles, disastrous enough under the most hopeful circumstances, was rendered still more lamentable by the state of Mozart's health and the haste with which the opera had to be composed. The arias, which are all-important in any drama of Metastasio, were considerably reduced in number, and instead of being placed in the most salient positions, were left wherever they chanced to come. It will be seen, too, that an aria which was originally intended to bear a certain relation to other arias and to recitative as a general background, must necessarily suffer in value by the alteration of the background, and by being itself forced into competition with concerted pieces on a large scale. The consequence is that the arias in Mozart's opera are either unimportant and uninspired, or else give the impression of being concert pieces, the more so as Mozart on two occasions provided the arias with elaborate *obbligato* parts for a solo instrument, which considerably distract the attention from the singer. This was in the interests of the clarinet-player Stadler, who had a florid clarinet

[1] Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, second edition, London, 1907.

accompaniment to Sextus' aria "Parto, ma tu, ben mio" in the first act, and in the second act accompanied Vitellia's "Non più di fiori" with an elaborate solo for the basset-horn. It is in the ensembles that Mozart is seen at his best. There are two little duets that have won a lasting popularity—"Deh prendi un dolce amplesso," for Sextus and Annius, and "Ah perdona," sung by Annius and Servilia. It was apparently to the lovely melody of this latter duet that Shelley wrote "I arise from dreams of thee," although it cannot be said that the words are well adapted to the tune.[1] Of the trios the best is that in which Sextus is brought before Titus by Publius; but the greatest of all the concerted pieces is the finale to Act I, in which the conflicting emotions of Sextus and Vitellia, Servilia and Annius are painted against a choral background. This finale has a great importance from the fact that it is the first time that Mozart has combined solo voices with the chorus in a big ensemble. His comic operas never employ the chorus in a finale at all, except in the few cases where an act ends with a movement for chorus alone. In "Idomeneo," on the other hand, each act ends with a chorus on a large scale, in which the principal characters take no part whatever.[2] But in the finale to Act I of "La clemenza di Tito" the chorus is itself a factor in the drama. It is the cry

[1] Mr. H. Buxton Forman discovered that the words of Mozart's duet (and not of Metastasio's original aria) were written on the same sheet of paper as the poem, and supposed that the Italian lines were written down as a metrical reminder of Mozart's music. See his articles in *The Athenæum* of August 31 and November 2, 1907. I am indebted for this reference to the kindness of Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco.

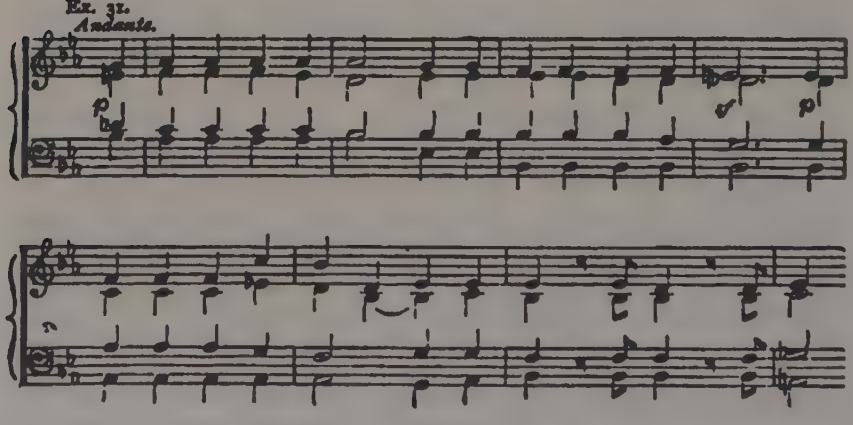
[2] Salieri had attempted to combine chorus and principals in this way in "Il ricco d'un giorno," but without much success.

of the people in the distance that tells the characters on the stage of the growing tumult, and as Vitellia's agony increases, we hear the chorus drawing nearer and nearer. This idea must have been entirely Mozart's own invention, since the chorus have nothing to sing except cries of "Ah!" until the principals, according to the usual custom (till then current only in comic opera) all join together to sum up the situation in four short lines, the last two of which are in this case repeated by the chorus. Mozart, moreover, has not treated the chorus merely as a means of gaining additional noise, as later composers have done. The chorus is still expressly marked "in lontananza," even at the end, though it is clear that Mozart intended it to be less distant than when first heard. It is therefore treated antiphonally with the group of principals, and the composer has evidently taken the greatest care so to write for it that it shall never overpower them, even in its loudest outbursts.

The music of "La clemenza di Tito" must be compared with that of "Idomeneo" rather than with that of the comic operas. It is clear that Mozart had a very definite conception of the essential difference of style between *opera seria* and *opera buffa*. The comparison, as might be expected from the circumstances under which the two operas were composed, is not in favour of the later work. In "Idomeneo" Mozart had accepted the form of the day, and was making a vigorous effort to expand it to its fullest capacity. He was bursting with ideas, and determined to give them all their most complete expression. When he wrote "La clemenza di Tito" the form was already archaic. It was a deliberate return to the past, except

for such modifications as have been already noted. In the great finale, at any rate, he had a problem before him, which he could devote all his energy to solving. Here one feels that there has been strenuous effort. In the arias and duets we see only the work of a composer who has the whole technique of music at his fingers' ends, and possesses a natural facility of invention; there is a perfection of finish, an invariable sense of beauty, but a want of inspiration and real passion that makes this spacious grandeur frigid and empty. Even in the finale to Act I there is at times a certain bareness which is not that of austerity; and this lack of driving power, combined with a certain noticeable modernity of phraseology, sometimes produces a very curious effect to our ears at the present day. Anyone coming across this passage[1] in ignorance of its context

Ex. 31.
Andante.



would be more likely to ascribe it to some English

[1] It occurs near the end of the first finale. The words sung by the chorus are "Oh, nero tradimento! oh, giorno di dolor!"—"Oh, deed of blackest treason! oh, day of grief and pain!"

organist of about 1861 than to a composer of Italian opera. Happy are those musicians who are able completely to cleanse their minds of these disturbing associations. If we are suddenly struck when reading "La clemenza di Tito" for the first time with the fact that this passage forcibly suggests the style of an Anglican hymn-tune, we must deliberately set ourselves to forget what is perhaps the more familiar kind of music, and to approach Mozart's opera from the point of view of those who first heard it performed. The effort is worth making, for it is a really salutary one, and will do much, each time it is made, to deepen our faculty of musical appreciation.

Mozart's audiences would not have suffered, even in 1791, so much as we do from the formality of the music. It was what they were accustomed to expect, at any rate in the composers who had won the established affections of average music-lovers. That Mozart's inspiration ran a little thin would have been a positive advantage to them, since they would not be disturbed by the necessity of making an intellectual effort in order to follow its developments. Moreover, Stadler's performances on the clarinet and basset-horn would have had not only the charm that attaches to any exhibition of virtuosity, but in addition the interest aroused by a new instrument. Finally we may surmise that the choruses with their deliberate simplicity of rhythm and their (for that date) decidedly modern effects of harmony would have produced an impression both of dignified solemnity and of dramatic power.

Mozart and his wife returned to Vienna directly after the production of the opera at Prague. Constanze went back to Baden to continue her cure,

and Mozart himself was now as much in need of medical treatment as she was. He had started the year badly, and the life he had been leading with Schikaneder now began to tell on his constitution. At the moment of his departure for Prague he had experienced a severe nervous shock by the sudden reappearance of the mysterious messenger to ask what was to happen to the Requiem. He arrived at Prague unwell, and naturally became worse with the strain of work at high pressure followed by the mortification of a failure. But well or ill, "Die Zauberflöte" had to be finished at once. Besides the instrumentation of the whole, there still remained the Chorus of Priests in Act II (No. 18), Papageno's song (No. 20), and the Finale (No. 21), as well as the overture and the March of the Priests, which were not written until September 28. Two days later the first performance took place. Schikaneder sang the part of Papageno, and Mozart's sister-in-law, Mme. Hofer, the Queen of Night. The first act was not received as well as had been hoped, and Mozart became so agitated that although recalled at the end of the opera he was very unwilling to appear. The state of his health at the time, besides perhaps the humiliating remembrance of Prague, was quite sufficient to account for this exaggerated nervousness. The general reception of the piece was considered disappointing, but Schikaneder continued to repeat it, and as he doubtless added continually to his own comic "business," and possibly to the stage effects also, it eventually became a popular success of a quite exceptional kind.

The opera once started on its course, Mozart returned to the Requiem, and even refused a pupil

rather than neglect it. His wife was still at Baden, and remained there most of October. His letters to her are fairly cheerful, though it is clear that he was neglecting his health on account of his work. "Die Zauberflöte" was going on well, and he was pleased to find that his old rival, Salieri, went to see it and enjoyed it. Yet he could not rid himself of the idea that he had been poisoned, that the mysterious unknown was a messenger from the other world, and that he was composing the Requiem for his own death. Da Ponte, who had written the libretti for "Figaro" and "Don Giovanni," suggested that they should go to London together; but Mozart refused on account of his work, and it was probably to Da Ponte that he addressed a letter in Italian so strange in its expressions that it is worth while giving it here in English:—

"My dear Sir,—I wish I could follow your advice, but how can I do so? I feel stunned, I reason with difficulty, and cannot get rid of the vision of this unknown man. I see him perpetually; he entreats me, presses me, and impatiently demands the work. I go on writing because composition tires me less than resting. Otherwise I have nothing more to fear. I know from what I suffer that the hour is come; I am at the point of death; I have come to an end before having had the enjoyment of my talent. Life was indeed so beautiful, my career began under such fortunate auspices; but one cannot change one's own destiny. No one can measure his own days, one must resign oneself, it will be as Providence wills, and so I finish my death-song; I must not leave it incomplete."

His wife on her return called in a physician, and took the score of the Requiem away from him. A Masonic cantata to words by Schikaneder gave his thoughts a change, and he became less depressed. But on returning to work at the Requiem he relapsed, and two days after he had conducted the performance of the cantata (it was finished on November 15, and probably sung a few days later) his last illness definitely set in. He struggled to go on with the Requiem, and got a few friends to try the vocal parts through with him on December 4th. But it seems to have been "Die Zauberflöte" that gave him the happiest thoughts. In the evenings he used to follow the performances in imagination, with his watch beside him, and on the same day that his friends came to try over the Requiem "he said to his wife: 'I should like to have heard my "Zauberflöte" once more,' and began to hum the bird-catcher's song in a scarcely audible voice. Kapellmeister Roser, who was sitting at his bedside, went to the piano and sang the song, to Mozart's evident delight" (Jahn). At one o'clock in the morning of December 5th he died; in the afternoon of December 6th he was tumbled into a pauper's grave. The Requiem was finished by his pupil Süssmayr, copied out by him (his handwriting was almost indistinguishable from his master's), and handed over by the widow to the messenger who had commissioned it. It is now well known that this man was merely the steward of a certain Count Walsegg, an amateur musician who wished to pass for a composer. He had, however, the good sense to realize his own want of ability, and therefore adopted the simple expedient of giving anonymous commissions to composers of merit for

quartets and other works. These he paid for liberally, and had them executed under his own name. The Requiem was ordered in memory of his deceased wife, and he himself conducted a performance of it on December 14th, 1793.

CHAPTER XIII

"DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE"—II

The libretto of "Die Zauberflöte" has generally been considered to be one of the most absurd specimens of that form of literature in which absurdity is only too often a matter of course. What Schikaneder wanted was a fairy-tale plot of the conventional kind—a good fairy, a wicked magician, a pair of lovers passing through various trials and ultimately united, thanks to the virtues of a musical instrument of magic properties; the scene was to be laid in what is conveniently called "the East"; there were to be scenic effects of a startling kind, with plenty of coloured fire and plenty of animals; the actor-manager himself was to have a comic part full of popular songs, with endless opportunities for talking to the audience and attracting an actor-manager's share of attention and applause. He found his material in the story of "Lulu," one of a collection of Oriental fairy-tales published by Wieland and others under the title of "Dschinnistan." The opera of "Oberon," with music by Paul Wranitzky, must have been already in rehearsal (it came out on July 28); the plot of this had been adapted from Wieland and served as a model. The initial idea of "Die Zauberflöte," then, was to be more or less as follows: The hero makes the acquaintance of the fairy queen, who gives him a portrait of her daughter, and sends him to rescue

her from captivity in the castle of the wicked magician, which he will be able to do by the help of the magic flute.

For some reason which has never yet been satisfactorily explained, the whole plot was completely changed at this stage. The wicked magician was made good, and the fairy queen wicked. Some of the music was already written, but Schikaneder was not going to have that wasted, and so the join was covered up as well as could be managed. The reason generally accepted for the alteration is that on June 8 Marinelli brought out at his rival theatre a comic opera called "Kaspar der Fagottist, oder die Zauberzither" (music by Wenzel Müller), which was a close dramatization of the same story. It has, however, been pointed out[1] with some plausibility that this reason is inadequate, since the popular composers of the day habitually used the same material and the same models. There is in fact little difference between the plot of "Kaspar der Fagottist" and that of "Oberon," either in Wranitzky's opera or in the libretto which J. R. Planché strung together for Weber. The principal idea that underlay the alteration was of a quite different nature. The opera as completed was no longer a mere fairy-tale with music; it was a glorification of Freemasonry, which the initiated could easily understand in the light of recent political events.

The position of Freemasonry in Austria at the end of the eighteenth century was very different from that which it holds in England at the beginning of the twentieth. As far as the outside world is

[1] Egon von Komorzynski, *Emanuel Schikaneder, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Theaters*, Berlin, 1901.

concerned, English Freemasonry is generally regarded nowadays as an eminently respectable institution, the principal object of which is the generous dispensation of charity. Freemasonry is, however, defined officially as "the activity of closely-united men who, employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others, and thereby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale."[1] All modern Freemasonry can be traced ultimately to the Grand Lodge of England, which was founded in London in 1717 by the remaining members of earlier masonic guilds and associations. Colonies from this Lodge were founded in Paris, The Hague, Rome, Madrid, Gibraltar and other places by Englishmen, and the association developed rapidly all over the Continent. Its main purpose was philosophical and philanthropic, but since its basis was broad enough to include men of all creeds and tendencies, it naturally included many members who made use of it to gain political ends. "This rapid propagation was chiefly due to the spirit of the age, which, tiring of religious quarrels, restive under ecclesiastical authority, and discontented with existing social conditions, turned for enlightenment to the ancient mysteries, and sought, by uniting men of kindred tendencies, to reconstruct society on a purely human basis."[2] It was only natural that a secret society which taught ethical doctrines on the basis of pagan symbolism and admitted all creeds

[1] *Allgemeines Handbuch der Freimaurerei.*
[2] *Catholic Encyclopædia.*

to equality should incur the hostility of the Catholic Church. The Freemasons had already been persecuted in Holland in 1735, and in France and Italy in 1737; in 1738 a papal bull was issued condemning not only the Freemasons themselves, but in addition all who promoted or favoured their cause. Yet in spite of persecution (there were further persecutions at Vienna in 1743 and in Switzerland in 1745) the society prospered, and increased even more than was beneficial to itself. Innumerable heretical sects sprang up, led by political intriguers, revolutionaries, spiritualists, alchemists, and charlatans of all kinds; Jesuits joined the order with the object of denouncing its members to the Inquisition. The confusion was so great that a congress was held in 1782 at Wilhelmsbad to reduce matters to order; and the choice of the locality shows how strong a hold the originally English ideals of Freemasonry had taken in Germany. The movement was at its height during the reign of Joseph II (1780–90). Joseph himself was not a mason, but his father Francis I had been initiated at The Hague in 1731 by the British Ambassador, Lord Chesterfield. Maria Theresa was too devout a Catholic to regard the craft with favour, but masonic influence was strong enough to prevent the bull of Clement XII (1738) from being published in Vienna. She did, however, suppress the order officially in 1764, but it continued to exist in secret, and was openly protected by Joseph after his mother's death. The object of Joseph's youthful admiration, Frederick the Great, had been an ardent Freemason; so was his successor Frederick William II, and during Joseph's own reign all the most distinguished and learned men of Vienna belonged to the society.

Voltaire was initiated in 1772 at the age of seventy-eight, Goethe in 1780; Herder, Lessing, Wieland (initiated at the age of seventy-six) were all masons, and so was Haydn. Mozart joined the order early in 1785, and it is clear from his letters and from his compositions that his connection with it exercised a very deep and lasting moral influence upon him.

The plot of "Die Zauberflöte," as modified, introduced an entirely new set of characters into the story—Sarastro, the high priest of Isis and Osiris, the Orator, and the Chorus of subordinate priests. It was well known that this group represented the Freemasons, since the connection of Freemasonry with the ancient Egyptian mysteries was a frequent subject for masonic dissertations. The wicked magician of the first plot was reduced to the status of a grotesquely tyrannical servant, and the fairy queen was unmasked as a vindictive female always seeking to do injury to the priests and their followers. Probably too, at this point, the names of the original characters were changed, so as to destroy all appearance of connection with Wieland's fairy-tales.

The libretto in its present form shall now be considered in detail. The first scene opens with the entrance of the hero, now called Tamino, but still by an oversight described as a Japanese prince. He is pursued by a huge serpent, and has no arrows left with which to defend himself. With a cry for help, he falls to the ground unconscious, and at that moment three Ladies dressed in black and carrying spears enter and kill the serpent. They are much impressed with the beauty of Tamino, and after a brief but energetic quarrel among themselves for the advantage

of being left alone to watch over him, depart to inform their mistress the Queen of Night, to whom they think he may be able to be of service. Tamino on awaking encounters the bird-catcher Papageno, who tells him that he has slain the serpent himself. The three Ladies re-appear, and after locking up Papageno's mouth with a padlock as a punishment for boasting and lying, present the Prince with the portrait of Pamina, daughter of the Queen of Night. Tamino instantly falls in love, and is despatched by the Queen herself to rescue Pamina from the clutches of Sarastro, whom she describes as a wicked magician. The Ladies remove the padlock from Papageno's mouth, and bid him accompany Tamino on his journey. Tamino is presented with a magic flute, and Papageno with a chime of magic bells; they are also told that they will be guided safely by three boys or Genii.

In the second scene we see Pamina being ill-treated by the Moor Monostátos, who further insults her by making love to her. Papageno enters; he and the Moor are each terrified at the strange appearance of the other, and run off in opposite directions. Papageno returns, informs Pamina of what has happened in the previous scene, and persuades her to run away at once to find Tamino. In Scene 8 the story begins to take a new course. Tamino is led on by the three Genii, with grave counsels of silence, patience and perseverance. He attempts to enter the temples of Nature, Reason and Wisdom, which stand before him, but is twice driven back by mysterious voices. On his third attempt he is met by a priest (the Orator), who tells him that he has been deceived by the Queen, and that Sarastro, so far

from being a monster of cruelty, is the chief priest in the temple of Wisdom. Tamino presses him for further explanations, but he refuses to say more:—

Tam. When wilt thou break the bond of silence?
Priest. When friendship leads thee by the hand
To join the temple's holy band.

The Orator re-enters the temple, and Tamino, consoled by the assurance of unseen voices that Pamina still lives, begins to play on the magic flute. He hears an answering signal from Papageno and hastens to find him; a moment later Papageno and Pamina enter in search of him. They are interrupted by Monostatos and the slaves, but the magic bells set these dancing and singing against their will. At this point Sarastro enters with his train. Pamina confesses her attempt at flight, to which he replies with characteristic gentleness. Meanwhile Monostatos has secured Tamino, and brings him to Sarastro; to his great surprise he himself is rewarded with the bastinado, while Tamino and Papageno are led into the temple with a view to their initiation.

The second act opens with a scene in which Sarastro and the priests agree to accept Tamino as a candidate. Nothing is said about Papageno, but he accompanies Tamino through some of his subsequent ordeals, in order to provide comic relief. In Scene 2 Tamino and Papageno are left in darkness by the priests, and are visited by the three Ladies, who attempt to turn them from their purpose, threatening them with the Queen's anger, as well as with eternal damnation. They resist, and the Ladies flee on hearing the execrations of the priests. In Scene 8 Monostatos finds Pamina asleep, and is on the point

of taking advantage of her, when he is prevented by the sudden appearance of the Queen, who commands Pamina to kill Sarastro, and secure for her the "sevenfold shield of the sun," which is in Sarastro's possession. Monostatos has overheard all, and threatens to betray Pamina, or even to kill her, if she still refuses to grant his desires; but she is again saved by the entrance of Sarastro. Scene 4 brings the second trial of the candidates, the trial of silence. Papageno cannot resist talking to an old woman, who frightens him by claiming him as her lover. The three Genii appear, bringing a table spread with food, the flute and the bells, which had previously been taken away by the priests, and repeat their counsel of courage and silence. Pamina enters, but both Tamino and even Papageno refuse to speak to her; she interprets this as a sign that Tamino no longer loves her. Tamino is then conducted for the first time to the assembly of the priests (Scene 5), where in the presence of Sarastro he is told to take farewell of Pamina, though Sarastro assures them that they will meet again. Papageno, left alone, has another interview with the old woman, who is finally transformed into his female counterpart Papagena, but removed immediately by the Orator. A scene follows in which Pamina, despairing of Tamino's love, attempts to kill herself, and is prevented by the three Genii. Tamino is now submitted to the final ordeal, symbolized by fire and water. Pamina joins him, and after passing through the fire and water to the strains of the magic flute, they are welcomed into the temple as initiates by the priests. Papageno reappears, and like Pamina is prevented from suicide by the Genii, and happily united with Papagena. In the last scene the Queen

of Night, accompanied by her Ladies and led by the traitor Monostatos, makes a final despairing attempt on the temple and its votaries, but is repulsed by the appearance of daylight, the opera ending with a tableau in which Sarastro and the lovers are hailed with joyful solemnity by the Chorus.

We may consider this libretto from various points of view. Considered by itself it is, of course, a mere agglomeration of absurdities; the language of the dialogue is for the most part a ludicrous mixture of theatrical commonplaces and trivial jests, while the versified portions are the most clumsy doggerel, relieved occasionally by passages borrowed from popular masonic songs. From Schikaneder's point of view as a manager, it contained excellent dramatic situations, and the desired opportunities for spectacular effect, as well as a good part for himself. But it is clear that whatever may have been the opinion of Schikaneder's own audience (and they were none too favourable at first) the opera can only appeal to later generations in a symbolical sense. Jahn mentions an interpretation from the masonic point of view published as early as 1794; but the most important commentary is that given in an anonymous pamphlet[1] published at Leipzig in 1866. According to this writer Tamino represented Joseph II; Pamina the Austrian people; Sarastro Ignaz von Born, a Freemason and a scientist of great eminence; the Queen of Night the Empress Maria Theresa; and

[1] It is now known to have been written by Moritz Alexander Zille (1814–72), a well-known theologian and teacher in Leipzig. He was an ardent Freemason and a man of unusually wide religious views in the Leipzig of the fifties and sixties—half mystic, half rationalist, with a great sympathy for the old pietists.

Monostatos the clergy, especially the Jesuits and the monastic orders. Monostatos might perhaps also stand for Leopold Aloys Hoffmann, a traitorous Freemason, who in 1792 persuaded the new Emperor that the Freemasons were organizing a revolution in Austria; but we cannot be certain that his machinations were known at the time of the first appearance of "Die Zauberflöte." The moral sentiments with which the opera abounds were drawn largely from masonic teaching. The reader will at once notice the importance generally attached to manliness and to friendship, the secrecy of the mystic rites, and the subordination of the female sex. The second act contains, besides many things which are intelligible only to the initiated, plenty of lines which any reader can recognize as characteristic of the tendencies of the period. Whether it was true or not that the Viennese lodges were organizing a revolution, it is evident that the writer of the libretto was saturated with the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus in Scene 1, when the candidature of Tamino is under discussion, a priest says, "Yet will Tamino have strength to endure the ordeals that await him? Remember, he is of royal blood." Sarastro replies, "He is a man; that is enough." In the next scene allusion is made by the Ladies to the Catholic condemnation of the order, which Tamino treats with just contempt. Sarastro's well-known air, and the song of the Three Genii with which the finale begins, are very similar in their sentiments and phraseology to the masonic songs of the day, some of which were set to music by Mozart himself.[1] Finally, the

[1] Others are quoted by Ludwig Lewis, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich und Ungarn*, Leipzig, 1872.

attempt of the Queen to destroy the "impious band" with fire and sword is obviously based on the events of 1748, when Maria Theresa, instigated by the Jesuits, ordered a raid to be made by soldiers on the Lodge of which her own husband was a member.

The sources of the plot in Act II have only recently been investigated. Jahn suggests that the story was merely inverted, and a handful of masonic allusions thrown in. Komorzynski, however, has shown that Wieland was again drawn upon for many details. Even the first plot was not taken exclusively from the story of "Lulu"; the starry Queen of Night and her attendant ladies, the vicious Moor, the portrait of the heroine, and the three wise Genii, are all additions made from other stories in the same collection. An old opera by Hafner called "Megära die förchterliche Hexe," dating back to 1761, but often given by Marinelli, provided a precedent for female villains and noble-minded sorcerers. Another opera given by Marinelli in 1790, "Das Sonnenfest der Brahminen," with a plot rather similar to that of Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine" and Delibes' "Lakmé," showed Schikaneder what sort of effects might be got from scenes of religious ceremony, and Wieland's tale "Der Stein der Weisen," which Schikaneder himself had produced as an opera, contained a magician who related how he had been initiated into the Egyptian mysteries. We must proceed, however, to the original source of Wieland's Egyptian inspiration. In 1731 a certain Abbé Jean Terrasson (1670–1750), who in 1721 had become professor of Greek and Latin Philosophy at the Collège de France, published anonymously a romance

entitled "Sethos, histoire ou vie tirée des monumens anecdotes de l'ancienne Egypte. Traduite d'un manuscrit Grec." Terrasson was a somewhat eccentric scholar,[1] who made a French translation of Diodorus Siculus, with the object, it was said, of showing the admirers of the classics how dull a classical author could be. Sethos is an Egyptian prince, born in the century before the Trojan War, son of a virtuous mother, who dies early in the story, and a weak father, who takes as his second wife a disreputable lady of the court. The first part of the book is mainly taken up with the education of Sethos, and his initiation into the mysteries is described in great detail. The second part describes his travels in Africa as a universal lawgiver and organizer of constitutions for savage tribes; finally he returns to Egypt and defeats the conspiracies of his half-brothers, but magnanimously hands over both his kingdom and his lady-love to them in order to retire into a college of initiates for the rest of his days. D'Alembert says of "Sethos":—

"Cet ouvrage, quoique bien écrit, et estimable par beaucoup d'endroits, ne fit cependant qu'une fortune mediocre. Le mélange de physique et d'érudition que l'auteur y avoit répandu, et par lequel il avoit cru instruire et plaire, ne fut point du goût d'une nation qui sacrifie tout à l'agrément, et que M. l'Abbé Terrasson avoit moins étudié en homme du monde qu'en philosophe. Mais si le roman de *Sethos* est inférieur de ce

[1] "On a dit qu'il n'était homme d'esprit que de profil, et Mme. de Lassay ajoutait qu'il n'y avait qu'un homme de beaucoup d'esprit qui pût être d'une pareille imbécilité" (*Biographie Universelle*). His criticism on Molière's "Don Juan" has been quoted in a previous chapter.

côté-là au Télémaque son modèle, il n'y a rien aussi dans le Télémaque qui approche d'un grand nombre de caractères, de traits de morale, de réflexions fines, et de discours quelquefois sublimes, qu'on trouve dans *Sethos*. Je n'en apporterai par exemple que le seul portrait de la Reine d'Egypte en forme d'oraison funèbre, portrait que Tacite eût admiré, et dont Platon eût conseillé la lecture à tous les Rois."

The success of the book cannot have been so very insignificant, for a second French edition (with two maps) appeared at Antwerp in 1732; an English translation by Thomas Lediard the elder in the same year; as well as a German translation published at Hamburg under the title of *Abriss der wahren Heldentugend, oder Lebensgeschichte des Sethos Königs in Egypten, verteutscht von C. G. W.* (*i.e.* Christoph Gottlieb Wend), and an Italian translation at Venice in 1734. Another German translation was published at Breslau in 1777–8, and the fourth French edition came out as late as 1813. The book appears to have been a good deal read in masonic circles, and is cited by French masonic historians of a century ago as if it were a standard authority on the Egyptian mysteries. Wieland knew it, and so evidently did Gebler, the author of the Egyptian play "König Thamos," for which Mozart had composed incidental music in 1773. The author of the libretto of "Die Zauberflöte" must have known the book intimately, for there are innumerable allusions to it in the opera, and at least two places where passages are borrowed practically word for word. Possibly Schikaneder took it for granted that the initiates among his audience would be equally familiar with it; at any rate, a study of

"Sethos" is of great assistance towards an understanding of the opera.[1]

The very first scene is a reminiscence of "Sethos," although Tamino falls rather short of the original in heroism. Sethos also set out to kill a monstrous serpent, but was clever enough to catch it in a trap and bring it back to Memphis alive, after having first estimated its size exactly by means of trigonometrical observations. This, however, was perhaps ill adapted to a musical treatment. The Queen of Night is modelled on Daluca, the stepmother of Sethos, and the three Ladies belong to her circle. She was desirous of being omnipotent at court, and therefore did her best to get rid of the wise philosophers who had frequented it in the late queen's time.

"The method she pitched on, as most expedient for her design, was to give the sole empire of conversation to such ladies of the court as she had observed the most vain, and who had the faculty of talking loud and long upon nothing. These ladies, like the queen, had all pass'd their meridian, and having made no provision to supply the loss of exterior beauties by the more valuable qualities of the mind, were extremely subservient to her design, without so much as knowing it. They were always ready to interrupt any discourse that might but savour of learning or

[1] The connection of "Sethos" with "Die Zauberflöte" seems first to have been pointed out by one Karl Gollmick in 1842; Tiersot mentions it, but does not investigate the question, in a series of articles in *Le Menestrel* (1893). It was for the first time thoroughly worked out in 1899 by Victor Junk (*Goethes Fortsetzung der Mozartschen Zauberflöte*), who apparently was not acquainted with Tiersot's essay. I had myself arrived independently at the same conclusion before meeting with either of these works, and have added a few further details not given by Junk.

ingenuity; but they were not often put to the trouble: for their own perpetual talk was so vain, and so little approved, that no man of sense could find room, or thought it worth while, to put in a word."[1]

The author also gives us to understand that these ladies were more energetic than discreet in securing the affections of handsome young men. Under these circumstances the education of Sethos is carried on by a faithful tutor, Amedes, who in the course of the story takes his royal pupil to see the Pyramids. Sethos, like Tamino, is much struck by the architectural grandeur of the temples. They explore the interior of a pyramid, using lamps which can be worn on the head like helmets; the Armed Men in Act II of the opera wear a similar head-gear. At a certain stage of the journey Sethos expresses a wish to be initiated into the mysteries; the reply of Amedes bears a strong resemblance to the speeches of the three Genii and the Orator in Act I, and to those of Sarastro in Act II.

"From this moment I suppose your youth at an end, and that from the desire you have just testify'd for the initiation, you this day begin to be a perfect man. The initiation, to which we are not allowed to invite anyone whomsoever in direct terms, is the enterprize of which I spoke ambiguously to you, and for which I required particular proofs of your prudence and valour."

We note that Amedes and Sethos enter the sacred precincts by the northern gate, as does Tamino; while discoursing together on morality they are

[1] The quotations are from Lediard's English translation.

secretly watched by the priests, who thus prepare themselves for their reception. As in the opera, an initiate is specially appointed as guide to the neophyte. Sarastro's air at the beginning of Act II is taken practically word for word from the prayer offered up to Isis after Sethos has passed through the final tests:—

"Isis, ô grande Déesse des Egyptiens, donnez votre esprit au nouveau serviteur qui a surmonté tant de périls et de travaux pour se présenter à vous. Rendez-le victorieux de même dans les épreuves de son âme en le rendant docile à vos loix, afin qu'il mérite d'être admis à vos mystères."

Up to this point the neophyte might if he wished return to ordinary life. He stood before a closed door guarded by armed priests, surmounted by an inscription which we find translated almost word for word in the duet for the two Armed Men:—

"Quiconque fera cette route seul, et sans regarder derrière lui, sera purifié par le feu, par l'eau, et par l'air; et s'il peut vaincre la frayeur de la mort, il sortira du sein de la terre, il reverra la lumière, et il aura droit de préparer son âme à la révélation des mystères de la grande Déesse Isis."

The door is opened, and Sethos passes through tests of fire and water, and then, by a curious mechanical device, into the temple, where he is received and congratulated by the priests. The descriptions of the tests and their elaborate machinery are too long and complicated for quotation here. It will be remembered that in the opera Papageno is unable to keep silence, and therefore does not proceed to the tests of fire and water. He is threatened

with lifelong imprisonment, and finally provided with a wife. In "Sethos" we find the source of most of these events:—

"For as soon as any candidate had pass'd the little door that was shut, and got a sight of the flames, if he offer'd to return, the three men, who were officers of the second rank, seized him, and made him enter through the door into the subterraneous temples, where he was for ever confined, that he might not divulge the nature of the trials. . . . Their imprisonment was not, however, very rigid. They were made, if they desir'd it, officers of the second order in these subterraneous temples, and were allowed to marry the daughters of such officers."

Even the noise of thunder which is of so frequent occurrence in the opera is here accounted for; Sethos is told afterwards that what he took to be thunder was merely the reverberation through the subterranean passages of the noise of closing doors, which served the double purpose of terrifying the neophyte and of warning the priests of his approach.

Yet one more quotation must be given, to illustrate the position of the female sex in the Egyptian mysteries. The priests were allowed to marry, and

"their wives, who in compliment were called priestesses, tho' in Egypt they had no sacerdotal functions, dwelt with them under the same roof. . . . But that which will appear, without doubt, mortifying to well-bred gentlemen, these ladies, who were most of them of singular beauty, never pass'd by him [the candidate] without paying him their respect, and he was not suffer'd to make the least show of a return.

By this he was put to a trial of that fortitude with which every virtuous man ought to resist the charms of the sex when they appear in competition with his duty."

How far the Abbé Terrasson's ideas of Egyptian mysteries correspond with the mysteries of Freemasonry it is, of course, not for an uninitiated writer to say. It is, however, noteworthy that a German writer on Freemasonry in a book published in 1886 and based on an anonymous French original[1] quotes the passage given above ("Quiconque fera cette route seul," &c.) as being not only a part of the ancient Egyptian ritual (citing "Sethos" as his authority) but also the inscription on the tomb of Hiram, which was read aloud at certain masonic ceremonies. The passage as given by him in German corresponds closely with the original German words of the duet sung by the Armed Men. I leave it to more learned investigators to decide whether these words were handed down simultaneously and independently through Diodorus and other classical writers on the one hand to the author of "Sethos," as well as by unbroken and secret tradition on the other hand to the Freemasons of the later eighteenth century, or whether possibly some branches of these latter merely found it convenient to draw upon the learned Abbé's popular romance for a portion of their mysterious liturgy.

The libretto of "Die Zauberflöte" was for a long time credited, and is credited still in many quarters, to Schikaneder himself, since he gave himself out on

[1] R. S. Acerrellos, *Die Freimaurerei in ihrem Zusammenhang mit den Religionen der alten Aegypter, der Juden und der Christen. Für denkende Geschichtefreunde frei bearbeitet und mit Anmerkungen begleitet.* Leipzig, 1836.

the original play-bill as the author of it. In 1849 Julius Cornet, a tenor singer and opera director of considerable repute, brought out a book on opera in Germany,[1] in which he made the startling announcement that the libretto was in the main the work of one Giesecke, who had eked out a humble existence as a chorus singer and actor of small parts at Schikaneder's theatre. He had acquired his information in a most curious way, and the story shall be told in his own words.

"One day in the summer of 1818, at Vienna, a distinguished-looking old gentleman in a blue coat and white neckcloth, wearing an order, sat down with us at the restaurant-table at which Ignaz von Seyfried, Korntheuer, Julius Laroche, Küstner, Gned and I met every day at noon. His venerable snow-white head, his choice manner of speaking, his entire deportment, made a pleasant impression upon us all. It was the former chorus-singer Giesecke, who was now a professor at the University of Dublin, and had come straight from Iceland and Lapland to Vienna with a natural history collection of specimens from the vegetable, mineral, and animal kingdoms in order to incorporate it in the Imperial museum. Seyfried was the only one who recognized him. The joy of the old gentleman at the sight of Vienna and at his recognition by the Emperor Francis (who had presented him with a really magnificent gold snuff-box blazing with diamonds and full of newly-minted ducats) was his reward for many years of privation and suffering. On this occasion we learnt much about old times; among other things we learnt that

[1] *Die Oper in Deutschland*, Hamburg, 1849.

he (who belonged to the order of Freemasons, at that time forbidden on pain of severe punishment) was the real author of "Die Zauberflöte," which as a matter of fact Seyfried had himself suspected. I tell this story according to his own statement, which we had no reason for doubting. He made this declaration to us à propos of my singing the *cavatina* that was added to the "Spiegel von Arcadien" [an opera by Süssmayr, 1794]. Many people thought that Helmböck the prompter had been Schikaneder's collaborator. But Giesecke undeceived us on this point too; he assigned to Schikaneder only the figures of Papageno and his wife."

Cornet was not accurate in his subsidiary details, as we shall see later; but he wrote his book thirty years after the event, and had never seen Giesecke before. Seyfried was naturally the only one of the party to recognize Giesecke, since he was the only one old enough to have known him in his theatrical days. The others, most of whom eventually became actors or singers of distinction, were much too young. Cornet, who was twenty-five, was studying singing with Salieri; Korntheuer, a favourite comedian, was manager of the theatre at Budapest, but came over to Vienna for occasional performances; Küstner, a well-educated man who had been influential as an amateur in theatrical matters, was then director of the Leipzig theatre. Julius Laroche was probably a son of Johann Laroche (d. 1807), the celebrated creator of the part of "Kasperle" at Marinelli's theatre.[1] Seyfried had been a pupil of Mozart, and was fifteen years old when "Die Zau-

[1] I have failed to identify "Gned"; it is possibly a misprint.

berflöte" appeared. He went to Prague to study law in 1792, but came back to Vienna in 1794 as the intimate friend and assistant of Peter von Winter.

Writers on Mozart have copied Cornet's statement from Jahn, and have gradually come to suggest vaguely that Giesecke was not what he gave himself out to be. It is nevertheless beyond all doubt that Giesecke's statements about his travels and his Dublin professorship were substantially true, and curiously enough the years which he spent as an actor in Vienna form just that period of his life about which we now know least.

His real name was not Giesecke, but Johann Georg Metzler. He was born at Augsburg in 1761, the son of a tailor, and studied law at the University of Göttingen from Michaelmas 1781 to Michaelmas 1783.[1] (Cornet states erroneously that he was a native of Brunswick, and was expelled from the University of Halle.) How he came to change his name is not clear. The writer of a memoir in the *Dublin University Magazine* (February 1834) suggested that he adopted his mother's maiden name on leaving the stage later on; but although he was entered as "Johannes Georgius Metzlerus" on the books of the University of Göttingen, he describes himself only a few days earlier in his own album[2] as "Carolus Ludovicus Metzler cognomine Giesecke." His mother's name, moreover, was not Giesecke but Götz. The memoir[3] goes on to say that he also

[1] K. J. V. Steenstrup, *Karl Ludwig Gieseckes mineralogisches Reisejournal über Grönland*, Copenhagen, 1910.

[2] Now in the National Museum, Dublin.

[3] Professor Steenstrup does not seem to have seen this memoir, though he quotes an article in the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*, which is evidently based upon it.

studied mineralogy, and became intimate with Schiller, Klopstock, and Goethe, maintaining a friendly correspondence with the last-named for many years; that he brought out a translation of "Hamlet" on the Vienna stage, and was supposed to be himself the original of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister"; that music was his ruling passion, and that he was "concerned in the composition of two operas, the musical departments of which were especially allotted to him. Little is, however, known in this country respecting his productions in this peculiarly captivating path of literature, into which youthful talent is so often seduced; even the names of the operas are unknown." It is not impossible that he was the original of "Wilhelm Meister," but of his friendly correspondence with Goethe nothing appears to have survived except a letter written from Ireland, dated 22nd September 1826, answering an inquiry of the poet's about certain barometrical observations—a letter such as any man of science might write to another without knowing him personally.

The album referred to above was evidently begun on his departure from Augsburg for Göttingen; it contains the signatures of a large number of persons, mostly schoolmasters and officials, with quotations in Latin, French, English and even Hebrew, which Giesecke was already beginning to learn. The entries almost all give the date and the place at which they were made, but the order of them is quite irregular; his friends wrote their names wherever they happened to find a blank page. Fortunately, he made an index of names, and this often gives additional information about the writers. After Michaelmas 1788, when he left Göttingen, Giesecke

is supposed to have become an actor at Vienna. It was stated later that he was thirteen years on the stage there; but we have no definite date for either the beginning or the end of his dramatic career. His reason for going to Vienna is unknown. But he might well have met Schikaneder when his company was acting at Augsburg in the winter of 1786–7, and if he joined the company there, thirteen years would bring him to 1800. The libretto of "Oberon" seems to have been his first attempt at writing for the stage, and whether he was the author of "Die Zauberflöte" or not, he certainly continued writing up to 1799, as far as can be judged from the dates of performances.[1] But he stated himself that he began travelling for scientific purposes in 1794. and the Dublin biographer gives this as the year in which he went to study mineralogy at Freiburg. It is not improbable that scientific study was one of his inducements to go to Vienna. In 1781 Ignaz von Born had founded his masonic lodge "Zur wahren Eintracht," the primary objects of which were scientific research and religious enlightenment. In 1783 he began the publication of its scientific papers. Moreover, it was in 1783 that Born brought out his well-known satire on the monastic orders, under the title of "Joannis Physiophili Specimen

[1] The following list of librettos is compiled from Steenstrup's memoir and Komorzynski's biography of Schikaneder:—1791, "Oberon," "Die Zauberflöte"; 1792, "Lutz von Unterstein" (play) and a German translation of "Le Nozze di Figaro"; 1794, "Die Schule der Liebe" (translation of "Così fan tutte"), "Der travestierte Hamlet" (comic opera, printed 1798); 1795, "Die Unterhaltung auf dem Lande" (comic opera), "Das Ungeheuer oder der Bauer als König" (fairy opera), "Idris und Zenide" (? opera), "Der Milchsüchtige" (translation of an opera by Méhul), "Das Entdeckte Geheimnis" (opera by Salieri); 1796, "Die zwolf schlafenden Jungfrauen"; 1799, "Der travestierte Aeneas," "Die Pfaueninsel."

Monachologiæ methodo Linnæana," two editions of which were printed at Augsburg. If Born had some sort of connection with Augsburg, young Giesecke may have known him, and it may have been through his influence that he became a Freemason. That Giesecke was a mason there can be no doubt, from the number of masonic allusions in the album, and from the masonic symbol which he appended to his own signature.

The album unfortunately contains hardly any entries belonging to this period. But he must have been in Vienna in 1799 and perhaps in 1800. In the following year we find the names of F. A. Hoffmeister, composer of "Der Königssohn aus Ithaka," one of Schikaneder's wildest successes (June, 1795), and of Ambrosius Kühnel, another musician, who in partnership with Hoffmeister founded the business (Leipzig, 1798) which eventually became the house of C. F. Peters. These signatures are dated from Leipzig. Two other signatures are of special interest. Nannette Schikaneder, niece of the manager, who was the original "First Genius" in "Die Zauberflöte" (Giesecke himself had taken the part of "First Slave"), writes under date of "den 13," to which another hand has added "Nov. 1800,"

der Augenblick des widersehens
Lont der trennung banger stunden.

This points to Giesecke having been away for some time.

Without date or place, but probably about 1800 or 1801, is the entry of Joseph Graf von Salm, *i.e.* Joseph Altgraf zu Salm-Reifferscheid-Dyck (1773–1861), a distinguished botanist: he

quotes four lines from "Die Zauberflöte" (Act I, finale):—

> Nur der Freundschaft Harmonie
> mildert die Beschwerden
> ohne diese Simpathie
> giebts kein Glück auf Erden.

A curious series of three entries, dated from Neuöttingen, "geschrieben im Hauptquartier," in September 1800, seems to point to his having returned to the stage, since the writers are a manager, an actor, and a singer. The singer was Michael Kistler, probably the same Kistler who sang Second Priest in the first performance of "Die Zauberflöte." But Giesecke seems to have associated with actors and singers wherever he went during this period. Many of them were probably Freemasons; among them was Beschort, a famous Hamlet and Don Juan of his day, who writes out those wild lines from "Egmont" beginning "Wie von unsichtbaren Geistern gepeitscht," &c., which Goethe himself quoted again at the end of "Dichtung und Wahrheit." This is dated 1801 from Berlin, where Giesecke was hearing the lectures of Karstens, whose name also occurs in the album. He was in various North German towns in 1802–3, also in Denmark and Sweden. In 1804 he seems to have made Copenhagen his headquarters for some time. The Dublin biographer says that he entered the Austrian diplomatic service, and was sent to Constantinople and Naples, but the albums give no record of any visits to Italy or the East.

At Copenhagen he opened a school of mineralogy, and was also a dealer in minerals; in 1806 Christian VII sent him on a scientific expedition to Greenland.

He remained there seven and a half years. In August 1818 he landed at Hull, looking probably rather like Papageno, for his European clothes had worn out, and he was dressed as an Eskimo in fur and feathers. He was given a hearty welcome at Edinburgh, and in December of the same year was elected to the Royal Dublin Society's newly-founded professorship of mineralogy, although his knowledge of English was not then sufficient for lecturing purposes. His being a Freemason may have helped to secure him friends in Edinburgh, though we must not suppose that it was the means of securing him the votes of a learned society as candidate for a professorship. In 1814 he visited Denmark, and received the Order of the Dannebrog from Frederick VI; henceforth he was known in Dublin as Sir Charles Lewis Giesecke, although he does not appear to have been knighted by George III. It was in 1817 that his portrait was painted by Raeburn, and presented by Sir George Mackenzie to the Royal Dublin Society.

He went to Copenhagen again in 1818, and thence to Vienna, where he arrived towards the end of the year, to hand over to the Emperor an enormous collection of objects from Greenland. It must have been towards the beginning of May 1819 (not 1818) that the meeting with Cornet and Ignaz von Seyfried took place. During the earlier part of the year the names in the album are mostly those of men of science —Joseph Hammer, afterwards Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, the orientalist; E. F. F. Chladni, the acoustician; Joseph Franz von Jacquin, the botanist. This last might have known him in earlier days, for his son was Mozart's dearest friend. We find three

interesting entries in May 1819. The first is as follows:—

Mögen die künftigen Vorfalle Ihres Lebens Ihnen lauter wohlklingende Transversal aber ja keine Longitudinal Schwingungen veranlassen. Bey beyden jedoch denken Sie an

Andreas Streicher
Nannette Streicher
Baptist Streicher
Sophie Streicher
Wien, 18 Mai 1819.

The curiously acoustical form of the Streicher family's good wishes is explained by the fact that Andreas was the founder of the famous pianoforte factory. His wife Nannette was a daughter of Stein, the pianoforte-maker, of Augsburg. Mozart had visited him in 1777, when Nannette was an infant prodigy of eight and a half; he gives a very comic account of her bad playing and her absurd airs and graces. However, she eventually grew up to be not only a good pianist, but also a very sensible and capable woman; at the time Giesecke saw her she was a devoted friend of Beethoven. Baptist was her son, then a young man of twenty-two, and her daughter Sophie was probably the "little letter-carrying pigeon" mentioned in one of Beethoven's letters to the mother.

On May 23 appears the name of J. J. Castelli, a well-known writer of plays and opera-libretti, and on May 24 that of "Joseph Ritter von Seyfried, Journalist," dated from Burkersdorf, with two others, O. Hauser and Anton Oeller. Joseph von Seyfried (1780–1849) was the younger brother of Ignaz. In 1801 he became secretary to Zitterbarth, the owner of the Theater an der Wien; he succeeded Castelli as editor of a periodical, and like him also wrote and

translated a large number of opera-libretti. Burkersdorf, now called Purkersdorf, is about seven or eight miles west of Vienna; Seyfried was perhaps setting Giesecke part of the way to Munich, where we find him in June. The others were probably chance fellow-travellers.

After his return to Dublin he appears to have settled down to regular scientific work. He continued to lecture, and also travelled over the greater part of Ireland in search of minerals. He seems to have been regarded with great affection in Dublin. A testimonial recommending him for the Professorship in 1813 says that "his manners are peculiarly prepossessing and gentleman-like"—a rather unusual compliment in these islands to a foreigner who spoke next to no English, and had just come back from seven years' solitude in Greenland. But he had an extraordinary adaptability to circumstances; he writes (25th May 1807) from Holsteinsborg in Greenland to a friend in Copenhagen: "I have now lived through a whole winter on this great stony frozen scene. You know I make myself at home at once everywhere, and act a play one day or go to sea the next with the same gusto! And so I can never say 'that was not what I expected'!" He was evidently a man with a genius for friendship; this is shown by the albums, and by the fact that he must have taken them to Greenland with him, since all his other books were destroyed in the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807. The second album, it may be noted, was evidently made up from older collections, dating back to 1781; some of the pages have suffered badly at the binder's hands. This was probably done after he left Greenland, as the fragment of an index (going

no further than the letter B) is in Latin script; the very complete index to the other volume is almost all in German script. He remained a bachelor to the end of his days. On March 5, 1833, though in failing health, he went out to dine with a friend in Dublin; after dinner, as they were sitting over their wine, he fell back in his chair and died.

It has been necessary to trace the course of Giesecke's strange career in some detail, in order that the reader may be able to form some idea of his remarkable personality. This is important, because the case for his being the original author of "Die Zauberflöte" rests almost entirely upon his own statement. Schikaneder produced the opera, and gave himself out as the author without making any acknowledgment to Giesecke or to any one else. His claim to the authorship was apparently never publicly disputed by anyone until Cornet published his book in 1849. If Giesecke was the real author, why did he allow his work to be published under Schikaneder's name? We know so little about the actual circumstances of the case that it is impossible to suggest a complete explanation of the mystery. Schikaneder claimed the entire authorship; Giesecke granted him Papageno and Papagena, but claimed the rest himself. Which of the two are we to believe? which of the two was the more likely to be speaking the truth? I do not wish to blacken the character of Schikaneder, who with all his faults was a man of great originality, and although in many ways erratic, by no means a scoundrel. But whereas it is easy to suppose that he would give himself out as the author of a play which he had at any rate pulled about and altered

to suit himself, there is no very plausible reason why Giesecke, at a time when he was a man of European reputation in the world of science, should have stated in the plainest terms that he was the author or at any rate part author of an opera libretto notorious for its imbecility, unless he were speaking the truth. Cornet expressly says that they had no reason for doubting his word, and his most recent biographer, Professor Steenstrup, remarks that the reader of his diary in Greenland always has a sure conviction that he can rely absolutely upon every one of his statements. Further proof it is impossible to give; the verbal similarities between the libretto of "Die Zauberflöte" and "Oberon" might equally well be taken as evidence that some of the second opera was merely stolen from the first. The deduction has been drawn from Cornet's story that Giesecke had to leave Vienna on account of being a Freemason. This is absurd: first of all, Cornet's words do not bear this meaning; and, secondly, supposing that they did, how in that case could Schikaneder have remained at Vienna, enjoying his greatest success by virtue of Giesecke's masonic opera? All that Cornet says was that Freemasonry was forbidden at the time of the opera's first production, and this, if not literally true, was at any rate not altogether devoid of foundation. There was evidently nothing in the opera which could give the police sufficient grounds for interference, but the work would be significant enough to the initiated, and if the notion became widespread that it represented the ceremonies of a secret and forbidden society, it would naturally attract all the more curiosity among the general public. It is possible too that some reason of this

kind was really at the bottom of Wranitzky's refusal to accept Goethe's sequel to "Die Zauberflöte" for the imperial opera-house in 1798.

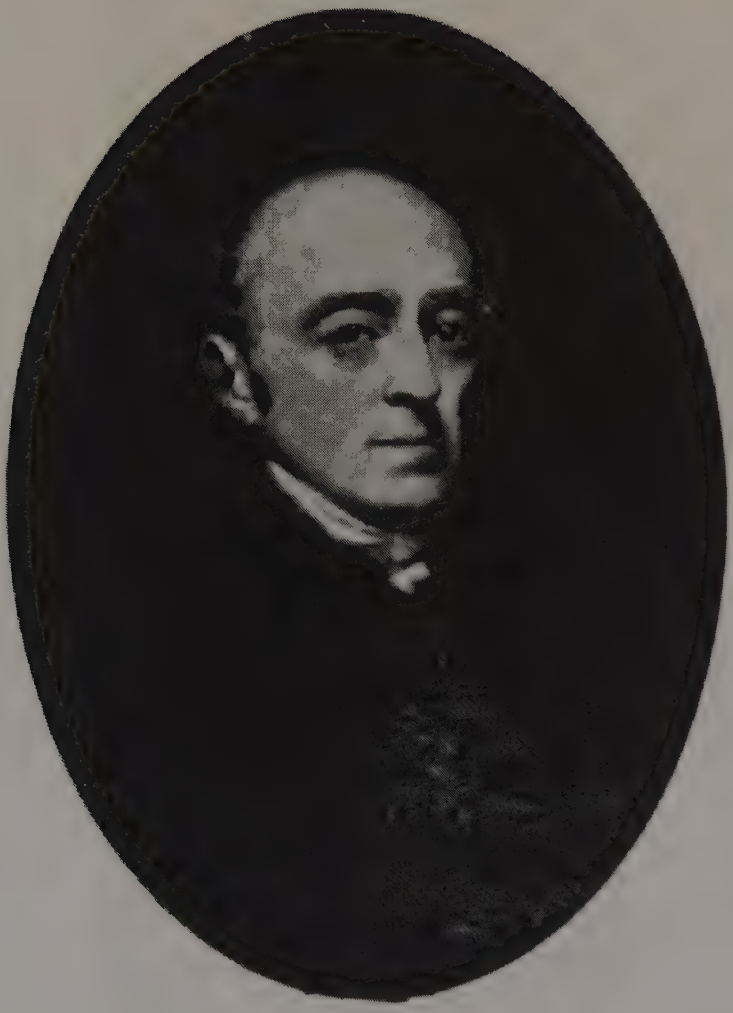
Giesecke's disappearance from theatrical circles may well have been mysterious to his fellow-actors if they did not happen to know of his scientific interests; it is not very likely that he discussed mineralogy with them. The simplest explanation of the whole Vienna episode would be that he had had his scientific enthusiasm awakened at Göttingen by the lectures of the famous Professor Blumenbach,[1] that on leaving the University he had determined to pursue his studies in Vienna, but having no means to do this, joined Schikaneder's troupe with a view to earning some sort of a livelihood, and left the stage as soon as some happy chance enabled him to devote himself to scientific work exclusively.[2]

A further confirmation of his statement was made to Otto Jahn personally by Neukomm, who had come to Vienna in 1798 to study under Haydn, and had himself been acquainted with Giesecke at that time. Neukomm, who died in 1858, was a musician of unblemished character, well known and much respected in England. That Giesecke was very reticent in after years about his connection with the stage is easily accounted for by the state of British public opinion in those days on all matters connected with the fine arts; the extract quoted from the *Dublin University Magazine* speaks for itself.

[1] He stated to the Royal Dublin Society that he first began the study of mineralogy under Blumenbach, who was Professor of Medicine at Göttingen.

[2] He may have been assisted by a cousin, Friedrich Metzler, who signed his name in his album at Vienna, 20th May 1819.

Cornet, after apologizing for his digression on the subject of Giesecke and his reappearance at Vienna, goes on to say with an insight that was probably in advance of his time, "'Die Zauberflöte' is the central starting-point of German opera, and it will have to be taken into account centuries hence, if anyone wishes to study the fundamental principles of the German operatic style; it is therefore not without interest to know who was the real author of the libretto, which was afterwards altered by various arrangers, to the detriment of its original German simplicity." The literary style of the work certainly does not reflect much credit on Giesecke; he probably began it as a mere piece of hack-work, and was quite content with Schikaneder's own dramatic effusions as a model. It is impossible to sift out his own portions from Schikaneder's; Schikaneder no doubt wrote the whole of Papageno's part, but he must naturally have had a hand also in the parts of all those who came in contact with him, even where Papageno is not necessarily in the foreground. We should however probably be justified in ascribing exclusively to Giesecke the scene of Sarastro's address to the priests, the scene in the garden where Pamina is rescued by Sarastro from Monostatos, the scene in which the lovers take leave of each other in the presence of Sarastro and the priests, and the whole of the second finale, except the scene between Papageno and Papagena. If so, there certainly remains to Giesecke's credit what is the best part of the whole opera. Giesecke is the creator of Sarastro, and Sarastro is not only the centre of the whole drama, but one of the most striking and individual figures in the history of musical drama. The actual phraseology of these



CARL LUDWIG GIESECKE

From a portrait by RAEBURN

EMANUEL SCHIKANEDER

scenes is of course neither original nor distinguished; but there is a consistent tone of real solemnity about them, and the style attains a certain dignity by virtue of its evident sincerity and its unadorned simplicity. Sarastro, as has been said, is supposed to have been a portrait of Ignaz von Born; and is it not reasonable to suppose that Schikaneder, the clever actor and astute manager, in spite of all the sincere admiration which we may believe him to have felt for the philosopher and the man of science, could hardly have been so well able to appreciate his qualities and materialize them in the person of the high priest of Isis as Giesecke, the young man fresh from the enthusiasms of university life, and himself an ardent devotee of those self-same scientific studies which had given Born his claim to eminence, and which were eventually destined to bear similar fruit in his own case?

CHAPTER XIV

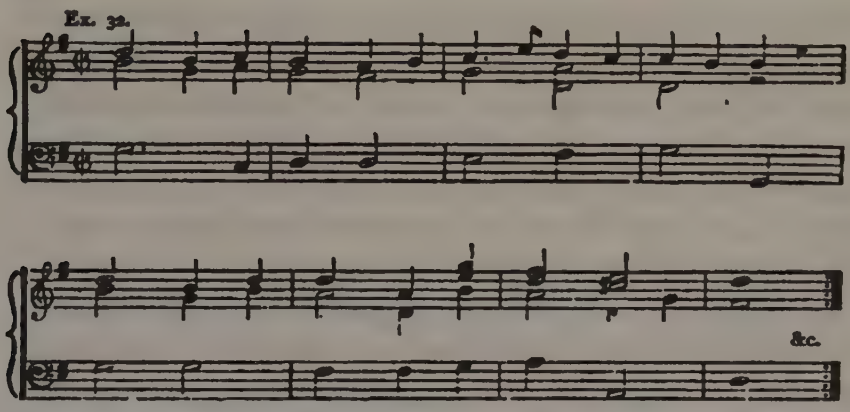
"DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE"—III

MOZART, as we have seen, was not a practised hand at writing the kind of opera that Schikaneder wanted. "If we make a fiasco," he said, "I cannot help it, for I never wrote a magic opera in my life."

We may therefore well imagine that his first step on this occasion was to cast about for a model; and the obvious model to take was Wranitzky's "Oberon," which was probably in rehearsal at the moment. The most conspicuous feature to him would naturally have been the part of Oberon himself, which was sung by his sister-in-law, Mme. Hofer, and which Wranitzky had evidently composed with a view to her peculiar abilities. She was a soprano of extraordinary compass and agility, and in the first act of "Oberon" sang a florid aria which must certainly have suggested the first aria of the Queen of Night, both being in the key of B flat, in common time, and marked *Allegro maestoso*. Wranitzky took her up to a high D; Mozart with more courage and skill made her sing the F above. Titania and her two-part chorus of Nymphs gave him the idea how to treat the three Ladies; Hyon and Scherasmin, hero and comic servant, suggested the style of Tamino

and Papageno. Scherasmin was Schikaneder's part, well stocked with tunes of a popular cast; and if the story is true that Schikaneder made Mozart rewrite the songs of Papageno till he was satisfied with them, and even suggested the tunes himself, we may well suppose that he held up Wranitzky's trivial jingles as an example of what true German melody ought to be. Even in the more solemn parts there was something to be learnt from him; the chorus "Dank, Göttlicher, für deine Lehren" at the end of Act I begins with a *Larghetto* in E flat (3-4 time) that gives a foretaste of Pamina's ensemble with the Genii, as well as of the quartet sung by Pamina, Tamino and the Men in Armour, and it is followed by a brisk movement, *Allegro assai*, in C major (common time) that corresponds to the chorus at the end of Act I of "Die Zauberflöte." It will be noticed that in all these cases the corresponding movements of Mozart's opera are in the same keys. Yet one more movement was borrowed from "Oberon," and that a most important one. The March of the Priests at the beginning of Act II was not composed until after Mozart's return from Prague. The story goes that Mozart was accused of stealing it from Gluck's "Alceste," but it is obviously "stolen"—if that is the right word—from the march to which Titania enters; it was probably not until after "Oberon" had been before the public some little time that Schikaneder and Mozart noticed how effective it was. As a matter of fact, the resemblance between Mozart's march and Gluck's is of the faintest; on the other hand, Wranitzky's composition is the most open and shameless imitation of the march in "Alceste."

Ex. 32.



As far as the end of the duet between Pamina and Papageno in Act I, "Die Zauberflöte" was intended to be an opera of the same type as "Oberon"; we may therefore legitimately compare the two to see what it is that constitutes Mozart's superiority to his contemporaries. At the first rise of the curtain, we notice Mozart's genius. Tamino rushes on pursued by a serpent. There must be time perhaps to let a few slaves hurry across and run away, certainly time for us to get a good view of Tamino and realize that he has no arrows left, time to take due note of the serpent, which Schikaneder has no doubt had made at great expense, with the latest ingenious methods of rolling its eyes and breathing flame from its nostrils, for Schikaneder was not the man to let any effect be suggested imaginatively rather than concretely realized. Mozart therefore gives us an introduction of seventeen bars for orchestra alone. We feel that he grasps the situation firmly at once; he sees all its possibilities, he knows exactly what effect he wants to get and makes straight for it with perfect success, owing to his absolute mastery of the orchestra, of poignant expression—giving us the accent

of terror in the very first phrase—and of the symphonic style, which enables him to take a small rhythmical figure and work it up in a gradual *crescendo* to the utmost agony of despair. With minor composers the vocal melody must suit the singers and please the audience; if it expresses the dramatic situation, so much the better. The orchestra is there to accompany, and to give the singer time to take breath and bow his acknowledgments. We are reminded of amateur actors, who can perhaps be dramatic while they are speaking a dramatic phrase, but forget to go on acting and relapse into their own uninteresting personalities when they do not happen to have anything to say. But with Mozart the opera is going on the whole time; if the singers are resting the orchestra is acting, the dramatic imagination is never relaxed for an instant until the movement comes, often reluctantly, to an end. This was new to his audiences. Gluck would have done it if he could; but his technique of composition is nearly always clumsy and awkward, except in small and formal dance-movements. The result was that Mozart's music was respected, but not much enjoyed: Dittersdorf said of him "he leaves his hearer out of breath; for hardly has he grasped one beautiful thought when another of greater fascination dispels the first, and this goes on throughout, so that in the end it is impossible to retain any one of these beautiful melodies." The Emperor Joseph and the opera-singers merely said that Mozart deafened them with his full accompaniment.[1]

Mozart, like all great composers, wrote for him-

[1] *The Autobiography of Karl von Dittersdorf*, translated by A. D. Coleridge, London, 1896.

self: and we can see in his earlier operas, especially in "Don Giovanni," his tendency to let a musical idea run away with him. It is this self-absorption, this consciousness, probably, that music is the only language in which anything really important can be expressed that accounts for the interminable length of "Così fan tutte," and for the confusion of plan that disfigures "Don Giovanni." The vice is of course still more notorious in the works of Schubert, and it is even more excessive in the two composers who influenced him most strongly, Rossini and Cherubini. It is apparent in "Die Zauberflöte" at the opening; the trio of the Three Ladies is disproportionately long, though no one could wish to cut a single bar of it. But it is evident that Schikaneder must have told Mozart that the rest of the opera must be on a less extended scale (his own part always excepted), especially if Mozart insisted, as he probably did, on making the total number of musical movements much larger than Schikaneder had anticipated. We are almost as much in the dark about the progress of the music as we are about that of the libretto. There is a sort of general tradition that Mozart was responsible for all the strong dramatic points of his operas, and the poets for all the weak ones; but it rests on the slenderest evidence. It is, however, clear from all Mozart's operas, even as far back as "Die Entführung," that he fully recognized the fact, so important in dramatic composition, that the interruption by spoken dialogue of the continuous flow of musical sound is almost always disastrous. The older German and French composers, among whom we are obliged to place even Cherubini for the moment, considered "Singspiel" or "Opéra-comique" as a play carried

out in prose with occasional pieces of music interspersed. Mozart (and in this lies one of his greatest claims to originality), being trained on Italian models, regarded his drama as a musical whole, in which non-musical speech was a highly unwelcome interruption, tolerable only at a pinch for certain necessary but unsingable explanations. The Italians did indeed sing them; this was the case in serious and light opera alike, and was merely a temporary reversion to the type of the first opera ever written, in which practically the whole had been musically declaimed. Second-rate Italian poets and composers made recitative dull; and second-rate German critics, despising what they had not the intelligence to understand, imagined that recitative was at all times a foolish and inartistic convention. The second-rate German composers made it plain that the musical phraseology which suited Italian conversation was ridiculous as applied to the German language; and indeed if they could do no better than attempt to copy Italian formulæ, they were well advised to stick to spoken dialogue. Yet they had a model, if they had known it, in J. S. Bach, who had had both the patience to learn from the Italians and the insight to grasp how the spirit, if not the letter, of Italian recitative might be infused into German music. Mozart knew and revered Bach as a writer of fugues and motets; whether he had any acquaintance with the cantatas is extremely doubtful. Nevertheless in "Die Zauberflöte" he shows us, consciously or unconsciously, that German dialogue could evolve a purely national form of recitative, as different in its emotional effect as the poetry of Goethe from that of Metastasio. The recitative which precedes the Queen's aria is conven-

tional and Italian; the conventionality fitted the situation in the first sketch of the opera, and was capable of a peculiar interpretation in view of the change afterwards made in the plot. But in the dialogue between the Orator and Tamino the difference is at once apparent. It sounds like a dialogue between Bach and Weber. Tamino is youthful and chivalrous, or hot-headed and unreflecting, according as we regard him from the Queen's point of view or Sarastro's; the Orator has learnt in years of experience not only wisdom but a sympathy with Tamino himself far deeper than Tamino can realize. The difference of dramatic character is indeed practically the same as the musical difference between Weber and Bach. Bach had studied the Italians in their most serious aspect, and never set a word of German without carefully weighing its exact literary and emotional value; Weber cannot be said to have studied the Italians, but he had absorbed Rossini's operas, and combined that mode of expression with a violent but spasmodic consciousness of his own nationality, to form a generally effective if often careless patchwork of unmusical rhetoric and melodious commonplace.

It is at the moment when Pamina throws herself at Sarastro's feet with the words "Herr, ich bin zwar Verbrecherin!" that Mozart's new treatment of dramatic speech is seen at its best. We feel here, as we feel so often in the music of Purcell or Scarlatti, that the absolutely natural musical expression of words has produced of itself a melody that is both beautiful and individual in an extraordinary degree. Pamina and Sarastro throughout that scene are vivid and real without ever breaking the flow of the music;

indeed, the whole opera bears witness to the fact that Mozart is most dramatic when he is most essentially musical in his means of expression. No wonder then that a return to the prose of spoken dialogue must have been offensive to him. The second act of "Die Zauberflöte" contains much more music and much less dialogue than the first;[1] and all through the opera the dialogue exists principally for the benefit of Papageno. If we take away Papageno's humorous scenes from the second act, and those ceremonial interviews of Sarastro with the priests, and of the priests with Tamino, which probably had to be spoken in order to bring out the force of their masonic significance, there remains only the scene between Pamina, Monostatos, the Queen, and Sarastro, a scene which Mozart may well have been content to leave as it stood, since it is the most dramatically effective piece of stage-craft in the opera. We may thus feel fairly certain that Mozart would have liked to make the opera continuous from beginning to end, but gave way to Schikaneder, who insisted on having as many comic scenes in prose for himself as he could find time for. Another proof of Mozart's point of view lies in the fact that throughout the opera the sequence of keys is carefully considered. The Overture is in E flat; the first act begins in C minor, and proceeds through C major, G, E flat, B flat (end of Scene 1), G, E flat (end of Scene 2), to the Finale, which begins and ends in C major. Act II covers a wider range. It begins in F, and proceeds through C and G to the end of the Quintet. Then follows

[1] This refers, of course, to the original German libretto, which is drastically cut down in most German theatres. It is, however, noticeable that the first act is much more cut than the second.

the scene just mentioned, in which Monostatos, the Queen, and Sarastro have violently contrasting airs in C, D minor, and E major respectively—the choice of unrelated keys heightening the contrast; after that follow the Genii in A major, Pamina in G minor, a chorus in D, with a trio in B flat, followed by Papageno's song in F. The Finale begins and ends in E flat, the key of the Overture. The second act may perhaps have been pulled about and re-arranged to some extent, though the further re-arrangement recently tried at Leipzig does not seem to be an improvement in key-sequence. It is however clear that even in the first act, where there was a very extensive desert of dialogue, Mozart felt and expected his audience to feel that the music was the more important thing, and the dialogue merely a temporary interruption. The terzetto for Monostatos, Pamina and Papageno in Act I illustrates this point very clearly; although it cannot be called incomplete or shapeless (it begins and ends in G, and preserves the balance of key throughout), yet it presents unmistakably the character of an *intermezzo*, designed to be preceded and followed immediately by musical movements on a larger scale.

"Die Zauberflöte," as we have seen, soon left its model far behind, and even if we judge Mozart only by the standard of his own works, it represents an advance towards an entirely new and unexplored region. In "Idomeneo" we see Mozart at his most passionate stage; in the three Italian comic operas it is his brilliant cleverness, his subtle psychological analysis that compels our admiration. "La clemenza di Tito"—that is, in those isolated moments at which that opera rises to real greatness—and "Die Zauber-

flöte" belong to his "third period." In his early days he aimed, as the Italians did in literature, at the expression of simple ideas in a complex language; that was, in fact, the underlying tendency of heroic opera. The passions with which it dealt were all of them of that obvious kind which had kept the theatre alive for centuries; the business of the composer was merely to intensify and ennoble them. The characters of Idomeneo, Electra, and the rest are essentially simple: the complexity lies in the technical means employed in presenting them on the required scale. "Figaro," "Don Giovanni," and "Così fan tutte," if they do not always show us real human beings, do not pretend to show us anything greater; and this difference is reflected in Mozart's music by a more direct simplicity of emotional expression, along with a greater intellectual complexity of construction. In "Die Zauberflöte" the characters cannot be described either as ordinary human beings or as heroes. To describe in words Mozart's musical attitude towards them is extremely difficult. One might say that, like the Germans in literature, he has expressed complex thoughts in the simplest possible language. There is not a movement in the whole opera, except perhaps the duet for the Armed Men, which presents the slightest difficulty to the listener; melody, harmony, rhythm, orchestration, all are characterized by an extraordinary limpidity and directness. Yet the essential thought which underlies the music is far deeper and far remoter from our ordinary consciousness than in any of his earlier works. It is for this reason that it is almost impossible to write analytically about the music of "Die Zauberflöte." One can point out the richness and mellowness of

its orchestral colouring, and show how far this is due to the employment of wind instruments in certain groupings; it was during the last two years of his life that Mozart began to realize the possibilities of the clarinet and basset-horn, owing to his friendship with Anton Stadler, for whom he wrote the clarinet quintet, and also a concerto, finished only a few days after the production of "Die Zauberflöte." But the sound of the orchestra is not due merely to the particular instruments and the way in which they are grouped; it depends much more on the ideas themselves, and the language in which they are expressed. Again, there are certain moments in the opera at which simplicity has of set purpose been abandoned, for instance, in the duet for the Armed Men, which is an old German chorale melody accompanied by an elaborate scheme of contrapuntal imitation, in the manner of J. S. Bach. Here one can, if need be, point out the skill with which the imitations are worked, one can cite the fugue in C minor for two pianofortes, and that in the Fantasia in F minor for a mechanical organ as parallel cases to illustrate points of the technique of expression. But in this particular scene it is at the moment when the *fugato* stops abruptly that we are lifted into a new world of feeling. It is impossible to comment in a literary form on such a thing as the march through the elements. That strange solitary melody for the flute, accompanied only by solemn trombones and drums, an effect so eccentric on paper, so trivial on the pianoforte, so indescribably impressive when heard in the opera, can only be explained by a purely musical commentary; we must compare it with Handel's march in "Saul" for one feature, with the flute solo

in the Elysian fields of Gluck's "Orfeo" for another, and for its deepest significance, with the last movement of Beethoven's C minor symphony.

It is this extraordinary simplicity that gives the characteristic colour to the solemn scenes of the second act. Yet this simplicity is deceptive; it is only after we have been through the complexities of the earlier works, only perhaps after we have grasped the complexities of Beethoven, that we can understand its innermost significance. The story of the opera is itself a lesson to those who would understand its music; we must prepare ourselves by silence and meditation, we must pass through the fire and water, before we can enter the temple of wisdom.

How intensely Mozart himself felt the solemnity of these scenes may be observed from one of the letters which he wrote to his wife at Baden:—

"The ——s had a box this evening, and applauded everything loudly, but he, the all-knowing, behaved like such a true Bavarian, that I could not stay there or I should have called him a fool to his face. Unluckily I was in the box just as the second act began, and so during the ceremonial scene. He laughed at everything. At first I was patient and tried to draw his attention to certain passages, but he just laughed at everything: that was more than I could endure—I called him a Papageno and went out, but I don't believe the ass understood what I meant."

The idea of making Freemasonry the groundwork of the opera must have been welcomed by him with intense cordiality. The pious Abbé Göschler in his "Vie d'un artiste chrétien du XVIIIe siècle d'après sa correspondance authentique" (Paris, 1857)

supposed that Mozart's enthusiasm for Freemasonry was due not to its philosophical doctrines, but to the opportunity which it offered him for doing good to others. If we were to judge by Mozart's letters only, a cynical biographer might equally well suggest that he preferred the opportunity of using his membership to induce others to provide a means of support for him. It is, however, a matter of fact that during the period in which he was living largely on the generosity of his friend Puchberg, he was allowing himself to be victimized by another mason, and one of less upright character, the clarinet-player Stadler. Moreover, a study of Mozart's letters will show us that, in spite of his life being a short one, it was long enough to include a certain change of outlook on religious matters. He had been brought up a strict Catholic, the son of a somewhat pedantic and narrow-minded father, himself in the service of a prince-archbishop. It would never have occurred to any of the family to question the absolute authority of the Catholic Church, any more than it would have occurred to them to question the absolute authority of a father over his children.

Rochlitz tells us that Mozart when at Leipzig in 1789 remarked to him "that a Protestant could not possibly conceive the associations which the services of the Church awoke in the mind of a devout Catholic, nor the powerful effect which they had on the genius of an artist." If the story is true (and the statements of Rochlitz must always be accepted with caution) we must remember that a German Protestant service would naturally strike a Catholic as very bare and dreary. Moreover, whereas Protestants do at least regard Catholics as Christians,

however misguided, there exist even nowadays Catholics, though perhaps not among the well-educated classes, to whom Protestants are merely heathens.[1]

An education of this kind would not encourage him to think for himself on religious matters, and although his correspondence shows that for a musician of the period he possessed a remarkable literary facility, yet he was never a well-read man such as we nowadays expect any first-rate composer to be. This is a sufficient explanation of certain passages in his letters from Mannheim [2] and Paris, which strike the modern reader as unpleasantly pharisaical, especially the outburst on Voltaire's death. After he had definitely broken with the Archbishop of Salzburg and taken up his abode in Vienna, he seems to have given his father cause for anxiety, and writes, not without some irritation, to assure him that he is conforming regularly to religious observances, although his opinions on fasting seem to be more reasonable than orthodox. Even at the time of his engagement to Constanze, when he was devout enough to plan writing a Mass on a large scale as a thank-offering, he made comic alterations in the pictures of her prayer-book, and wrote in it, "Seyn Sie nicht gar zu andächtig" (Don't be too devout!).[3]

It has already been pointed out how in the years following his establishment in Vienna he made the acquaintance of various men of distinction in the

[1] A middle-class Italian asked me the other day "Quale è la differenza fra la religione anglicana e quella cristiana?"

[2] The English translation of Jahn makes Mozart speak of the oboist Kamm as "a libertine," but the original German "Libertin" is more probably to be understood as "a freethinker."

[3] Nottebohm, *Mozartiana*, Leipzig, 1880.

world of learning, especially of the group which centred round Ignaz von Born. Born, who in his younger days had been a Jesuit, though only for sixteen months, was a man of science and an investigator, an intellectual type such as Mozart could never have come across in Salzburg. It was Born whose influence dominated the masonic group which Mozart joined in 1785, and it was in Born's honour that he composed the masonic cantata "Maurerfreude." Four other masonic compositions belong to this same year. The best known is the "Maurerische Trauermusik," for small orchestra, a noble and dignified elegy on the death of Duke Georg August of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Prince Franz Esterhazy, both masons; the other works are vocal—"Die Gesellenreise," "Zur Eröffnung der Loge," and "Zum Schluss der Loge." The vocal works are written in an easy style as far as the choruses are concerned; but they none the less show something of that gentle solemnity which characterizes Sarastro's airs in "Die Zauberflöte." The words are of similar character. The longer cantata "Maurerfreude" is of special technical interest, for in it we find Mozart utilizing the conventional elaborate structure of an Italian operatic aria along with a careful setting of the words that results in a definitely German type of melodic expression. It must be remembered that although Mozart was then twenty-nine years of age, he had never written music to German words of really serious character. There is certainly a great variety of expression in the German opera "Die Entführung," but it is always the conventional expression of the stage, and generally Italian rather than essentially German in style. We may note, too,

that to 1785 belongs the one song which he wrote to words of real poetic merit—Goethe's "Das Veilchen."

The influence of Freemasonry upon him is seen most remarkably in a letter which he wrote to his father in the spring of 1787. The old man was in failing health, and Mozart evidently understood that there was little hope of his recovery; he did in fact die on May 28, not quite two months later.

"I hear this very moment what is a great blow to me—the more so since I could gather from your last letter that you were, thank God, quite well. But I now hear that you are really ill. I need not tell you how much I long to have comforting news from your own hand, and I have a confident hope of this too—although I have made it a regular habit to imagine the worst in everything. Since death (take my words literally) is the true end and object of our life, I have in the last couple of years made myself so well acquainted with this true and best friend of mankind, that the idea of it not only has no more terror for me, but much that is tranquillizing and comforting. And I thank my God that He has granted me the good fortune to obtain the opportunity (you understand what I mean) of regarding death as the *key* that unlocks our true happiness. I never lie down in bed without considering that I perhaps, young as I am, may the next day be no more; yet not one of all those that know me could say that I was morose or melancholy in social intercourse, and for this happiness I thank my Creator daily, and wish heartily that the same happiness may be known to everyone of my fellow-men. I hope and wish that you may be in better health at this moment of

writing; but if, contrary to all my expectation, you are not better, I beg you by * * * * * * * not to conceal it from me, but to write the whole truth or let some one write it for you, that I may be in your arms as fast as is humanly possible. I conjure you by all that—we hold sacred."[1]

The mysterious allusions to things known only to his father and himself, and the fact that his new outlook on life and death dates from only two years before, show plainly that the letter refers to masonic teaching.[2] If this was the state of his mind in 1787, the year of "Don Giovanni" and the two great string quintets in C and G minor, we may well imagine him to have been peculiarly obsessed by masonic philosophy in 1791, when he was only too painfully conscious of his own approaching end. To that year too belong the only other masonic compositions of his that we possess—a solo-cantata "Die ihr des unermesslichen Weltalls Schöpfer ehrt," and the "Kleine Freimaurer-Cantate," the last work completed before his death. It is important fully to realize the psychological conditions of Mozart's last year; the anxiety which his wife's health caused him, his certainty that he had himself been poisoned, the mysterious circumstances that surrounded the commissioning of the Requiem. The idea of death is almost continuously prominent in the second act of "Die Zauberflöte"; Sarastro's first air, the dialogue between Tamino and the Orator, the duet of the Two

[1] This letter is here translated afresh from the German. The version given in the English translation of Jahn is not accurate in details.

[2] Jahn and Nohl both take this view. The fact that hardly any letters from Mozart to his father belonging to these last three years have survived is supposed to be due to Leopold's having destroyed them on account of their masonic allusions.

Priests, Sarastro's second air—all allude to it, and the climax is reached in the scene of the two Men in Armour. As Tamino has to overcome the fear of death, so Mozart showed that he had done so in 1787; was he holding firm in 1791? He was thrown more than ever with his masonic friends at that time; moreover, the death of Ignaz von Born on July 24 must have deeply affected all those who were members of his circle. Indeed, one might be tempted to think that it was Born's death which induced Mozart and Schikaneder to introduce the masonic element into their opera, if we did not know from a letter of Mozart's to his wife that this must have been already decided on at the beginning of June, since he quotes to her the line "Tod und Verzweiflung war sein Lohn."[1]

There was, however, another and an opposing force at work on Mozart's mind—the composition of the Requiem.

Mozart had written no church music at all since he left Salzburg and its archbishop for good, except the unfinished Mass in C minor, begun in 1782, and the little motet "Ave verum corpus," written at Baden, 17 June 1791, for his friend the choir-master Stoll, who sometimes performed his early Salzburg Masses. Certainly he always prided himself on his organ-playing and on his knowledge of the ecclesiastical style; but we may suspect that it was more a just pride in his mastery of counterpoint and fugue than a sense of vocation to the music of the church. It is therefore interesting to compare the Requiem with

[1] This fact strengthens the theory that the change of plot was made on account of Marinelli's rival opera; but it gives us no clue why, if the plot was altered, it should have been altered in the interests of Freemasonry.

"Die Zauberflöte," the Catholic with the masonic idea of death, and see what light they throw upon each other.

The difference is at once apparent; the words of the Requiem insist constantly upon just that fear of death which Freemasonry had taught Mozart to overcome. To compare the two works in detail would require a profusion of musical examples and an elaboration of technical analysis for which this is not the place. I can only invite the reader to study the two compositions together. A general similarity of style will strike us immediately, and it is not merely that similarity that is inevitably apparent in works produced by the same man at the same period. One very important point of resemblance is the employment in both of trombones and basset-horns, instruments which, as has been said, were not in common orchestral use at that date. Moreover, in both works it is not merely that these instruments form constituent parts of the orchestra; they are employed in such a way as to stand out prominently, so that both opera and Requiem are entirely dominated by the sound of them. There is, of course, nothing strange about the use of the trombones in the Requiem. Florian Gassmann's Requiem, which must undoubtedly have served as Mozart's model, employs them almost continuously in certain movements, just as Mozart's does, and Salieri thought fit to add trombone parts in the same style to a Requiem by Jommelli which seems to have maintained its popularity up to Mozart's day, although belonging to an earlier generation and a much simpler style.[1] It is therefore all

[1] See two papers by me on "The Predecessors of Mozart's Requiem," *Monthly Musical Record*, June and July 1907.

the more remarkable that we should find them employed in a similar way in "Die Zauberflöte." The dramatic value of the trombones has already been discussed at some length in the chapters on "Idomeneo" and "Don Giovanni"; but in those operas they are introduced only as exceptional effects, and as effects which are scenic rather than orchestral. In "Die Zauberflöte" this is not the case, except at the moments when the priests blow their horns. Here they form the main background of the opera, and Mozart wishes by this means to make us understand that we are not to look upon mystical experience as a thing revealed to us only by miraculous agencies, on occasions so rare as to be recorded only in legend, but as an essential part of our own lives, if we are willing to open our souls' eyes to the contemplation of it. That "unknown region," of which only a glimpse is shown to us in "Idomeneo" and "Don Giovanni," here becomes the actual scene of the whole opera. Just as it requires a certain conscious volition to transfer our minds from the world of every day to the world of musical drama, in which we feel that music is our real and normal mode of expression and speech only a foreign language, so, if we have accomplished this first step, the new sound of Mozart's orchestra in "Die Zauberflöte" transfers us from the world of heroes to yet another world, where ordinary human passions, even in their musical form, hold sway only over those upon whom the new light has not yet dawned. And if we compare the opera with the Requiem, we shall find not merely a common background, but a common background seen from two different points of view, like one of those silks which show a bright pattern against a

dark fabric, or a dark pattern against a bright fabric, according to the angle at which the light strikes them. In the "Tuba mirum" we shall recognize certain phrases of Tamino and Pamina, as they appear to us while still undergoing the pain of their ordeals, in the "Dies Irae" and the "Confutatis" we shall see even more clearly the baffled rage of Monostatos and the Queen of Night.

The Requiem, in spite of its beauty, can hardly be contemplated without pain; it cannot fail to strike us as the product of a morbid and diseased imagination, fascinating indeed, like some of Schumann's late works, from a pathological standpoint, but only distressing to those who have yielded to the natural temptation to regard the personality of Mozart with affectionate interest.[1] It is to "Die Zauberflöte" that we must turn to know Mozart's religious feelings at their sanest and most exalted moment. He had given a noteworthy expression to them even as early as 1773 when he wrote incidental music to Gebler's Egyptian play "König Thamos." Jahn well says of the choruses, "There is no question that their whole conception is grander, freer, and more imposing than that of any of his Masses belonging to that period; but this is because he felt himself unfettered by conventional restrictions. A solemn act of worship was represented on

[1] We may note in this connection that when Mozart was dying his sister-in-law went at his wife's request to the priests of the Peterskirche and begged that one might be sent to Mozart "as if by chance"; they refused for a long time, and it was with difficulty that she persuaded "these clerical barbarians" to grant her request (Jahn). This looks as if Mozart was unwilling to receive sacerdotal ministrations, and the priests equally unwilling to visit him owing to his unorthodox views. Jahn's very detailed account makes no mention of a priest ever arriving at the house.

the stage, the expression of reverence to the Supreme Being was heightened in effect by the Egyptian surroundings, and Mozart's endeavour was to render the consequent emotions with all possible truth and force." There are clear reminiscences of these choruses in "Die Zauberflöte," notably on the entrance of Sarastro. It is just this sense of freedom and grandeur that is often wanting in Mozart's church music; we see even in the Requiem that he is at times not expressing primary and elemental religious emotions, but seeking rather to reproduce the correct and conventional ecclesiastical atmosphere.

This contrast illustrates another point that is noteworthy in "Die Zauberflöte." To us who have been brought up on Wagner it may seem strange that, although "Die Zauberflöte" was designed to show off scenic effects, there are, nevertheless, hardly any scenic effects in the music. There is a vague suggestion of the serpent in the introduction, and a suggestion of the fluttering and hovering movements of the Genii on their second entrance, which Schikaneder intended to be made in a "Flugwerk"—a vehicle such as Wagner's Rhine-maidens used to employ in early performances of the "Ring." The introduction to the Queen's first recitative might perhaps be considered descriptive, and there is certainly an unmistakable piece of scene-painting at the end of the opera when she flies in terror at the "ungeheures Getöse," which as in Goethe's "Faust" announces the approaching sun. Weber, let alone Wagner, could never have thrown away the opportunities that were offered by the ordeals of fire and water. Mozart prefers to concentrate our attention

solely on the psychological aspect of the drama. In this he shows his unerring instinct for the stage. From the moment at which the plot of the opera was changed, externals ceased to have any real importance. The story may seem "undramatic" to modern opera-goers; there is a sense of restraint and austerity which is seldom broken, except of course by the Queen and Monostatos.[1] The real drama is the development that takes place in the minds of Tamino and Pamina, and it is for this reason that Mozart will not allow our attention to be distracted from it for a moment. I can find no better words to describe the great scene which begins with the duet of the two Men in Armour, and ends with the welcome of the Chorus to the heroic pair, than a passage quoted by various masonic authors to illustrate the connection of Freemasonry with the ancient Mysteries:[2]—

"The mind is affected and agitated in death, just as it is in initiation into the Great Mysteries; wherefore to die (τελευτᾶν) and to be initiated (τελεῖσθαι) are alike both in name and experience. The first stage is nothing but errors and uncertainties, labourings, wanderings and darkness. And now, arrived on the verge of death and initiation, everything wears a dreadful aspect; it is all horror, trembling and affrightment. But this scene once over, a miraculous and divine light greets the neophyte; he is

[1] Papageno and Papagena are certainly neither austere nor restrained; but as has been pointed out, they do not belong to the original opera at all, and might be omitted entirely without damage to the essential plot.

[2] Ascribed by Stobaeus (Flor. cxx. 28–iii. p. 466, Gaisford) to Themistius, but generally supposed to be from Plutarch.

received into pure regions, and meadows wherein are songs and dances and the solemnity of holy sounds and sacred visions. Here, perfect and initiated, he is free; crowned aud devoid of care he walks in the company of the blessed."

CHAPTER XV

"DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE"—IV

It may well be wondered why Mozart's masonic brethren did not secure him a more dignified funeral; the reason probably was that owing to the disease (malignant typhus) of which he died, it was necessary to dispose of the corpse as quickly as possible. The widow was completely prostrated, and allowed all arrangements to be made by Baron van Swieten. The Freemasons published Mozart's last cantata, selling the copies for her benefit and that of the children, and in 1792 printed a speech and poem in memory of the deceased composer. Constanze eventually married again, her second husband being Georg Nissen, of the Danish diplomatic service, "a tiresome, but an upright and honourable man" (Jahn), who published a life of Mozart in 1828. Nissen is responsible for the story that Schikaneder cheated Mozart out of the profits of "Die Zauberflöte." It may have been true that Schikaneder at the time of Mozart's death ran about shouting "His ghost pursues me everywhere! he is always before my eyes!" Schikaneder did eventually die insane. But it is not in the least likely that he sold copies of the score, as was alleged, without Mozart's consent, for the opera was not performed at any other theatre but his own until 1794, when it was given at Berlin, at Hamburg, and (under Goethe's direction, with

the words re-written by Vulpius) at Weimar. At Brunswick it was given in a French translation, and at Dresden in Italian, until Weber produced it in German in 1818. Goethe was a devoted admirer of it, and during the twenty years that he directed the Weimar theatre and its dependent stages "Die Zauberflöte" was performed eighty-two times.[1] He is reported to have said that it required more intelligence to appreciate the beauties of the opera than to criticize its weak points. In speaking to Eckermann of the second part of "Faust" he remarked, "I am content if the general public enjoys what it sees; at the same time the higher meaning will not escape the initiated, just as is the case with 'Die Zauberflöte' and other things."[2] His most obvious tribute to its merits is the fact that he began to write a sequel to it, which was printed as a fragment in 1802. He appears from a letter to Schiller to have conceived this idea in 1795; in January 1798, he wrote to Wranitzky suggesting that the imperial opera-house at Vienna should take it up. His reason for selecting Wranitzky was probably twofold. Wranitzky had not only made a success with "Oberon," which was often given at Weimar, but he was also a Freemason. Wranitzky, however, replied that the management of the imperial opera-house would not entertain the

[1] "Don Giovanni" was given sixty-eight times. No other play or opera attained so many performances.

[2] Another story of Eckermann's which bears on "Die Zauberflöte" seems to have escaped commentators. Goethe was complaining of the frequent inability among Germans to distinguish between B and P, or D and T; Eckermann instanced a young female singer who having to say "Er hat sich den Eingeweihten gewidmet" pronounced the word "Eingeweihten" (initiated) as if it were "Eingeweiden" (intestines). Eckermann did not quote the sentence accurately, but there can be no doubt that he refers to this passage (Act II, scene 3).

idea, since the original "Zauberflöte" was being performed by a private manager (Schikaneder) at a suburban theatre. Moreover, he suggested that the contrast between Goethe's poem and Schikaneder's would be as unfortunate as that between Mozart's music and his own. Goethe let the matter drop, and only took it up again in 1798 at the suggestion of Iffland, who wished to bring out the work at Berlin. Schiller, however, warned him that the success of it would depend entirely on the composer. Zelter seems to have had an idea of setting it to music, but cannot have taken it very seriously, for when Goethe asked him in 1803 "how the music to the second part of 'Die Zauberflöte' was going," he entirely misunderstood the question and replied with a long account of the Berlin performances of quite another "second part of 'Die Zauberflöte.'"

For Schikaneder the opera had been more than a success. Not only was it popular in itself, but it was the forerunner of a whole series of magic operas, in which the most effective parts of "Die Zauberflöte" were repeated and exaggerated. We do not generally think of the "menagerie" as the characteristic feature of "Die Zauberflöte"; the animals can for the most part be omitted without injury to the drama. But it was the animals that Schikaneder's audience enjoyed, and Schikaneder himself as Papageno; it was such features as these that made the popularity of the subsequent pieces. In 1790 Schikaneder brought out his own sequel to "Die Zauberflöte"—"Das Labyrinth, oder der Kampf mit den Elementen." The music was by Peter von Winter. He had been one of Mozart's bitterest enemies in earlier days, and it is curious that he should have been called in by Schikaneder to write a sequel to Mozart's last opera. We might think

that he had perhaps become a Freemason, and in that way come to a more friendly understanding; but "Das Labyrinth" makes no use of masonic symbolism,[1] except that the "three chords" are of frequent occurrence towards the beginning—the "three chords," which, it will be remembered, are a very characteristic feature of Mozart's opera, being heard first in the middle of the overture, and again on several occasions in the course of the masonic scenes of Act II. The rhythm has a peculiar significance to Freemasons; but whether Winter understood it may be doubted, since he uses the rhythm in a less dignified form, and employs it principally to accompany the convivial chorus in honour of the union of Pamina and Tamino.

Whether Goethe was influenced by "Das Labyrinth" is not clear. It enjoyed great popularity in Germany as well as in Vienna; but the resemblances of Goethe's sequel may be mere coincidences.[2] Zelter after eleven years' interval, took up the subject again, and asked Goethe to finish the libretto; but this time it was Goethe who was indifferent. The sequel to "Die Zauberflöte" was never finished, for the very good reason that Goethe was utilizing the ideas of it for other and greater works. It is not necessary to analyse Goethe's plot in detail. He brings out, as only a great poet could do, all the essential character of the various persons represented, whom Schikaneder and Giesecke could only sketch roughly and crudely, and whose real personality it was left to Mozart to complete. But there is a further interest in the work: it contains the germs not only of the second part of

[1] I state this on the authority of Komorzynski.

[2] Komorzynski thinks Goethe did derive ideas from it; Junk is of the contrary opinion.

"Faust," but even, we may say, of Wagner's "Ring." A child is born to Tamino and Pamina, but is mysteriously imprisoned by the spells of the Queen, until finally, like Euphorion, the son of Faust and Helen, he bursts his earthly fetters and disappears into the viewless heights. We find the "Ring" foreshadowed in the scene where the Queen of Night sits brooding, solitary and inactive, like Erda, while Sarastro, like Wotan, leaves the community of the priests and goes forth as an unknown "wanderer" over the face of the earth. There is indeed a curiously Wagnerian touch in Mozart's music at the moment when Pamina tells Tamino how her father made the magic flute; and Nohl [1] tells us that Liszt said "Der Ring des Nibelungen wird noch einmal die Zauberflöte unserer Zeit werden."

A German writer on "Goethe as a Freemason" [2] has maintained that in addition to Goethe's specifically masonic poems, which are numerous, there is hardly a work of his written after 1780 that does not bear traces of masonic influence. The most important, of course, are "Wilhelm Meister" and the second part of "Faust." Whether this be true or not, it may be noted that there are many passages in Goethe which seem curiously illustrative of scenes in "Die Zauberflöte," quite apart from his own sequel to it. Sarastro and the priests find their obvious counterpart in "Die Geheimnisse"; the words of Mephistopheles,

> Verachte nun Vernunft und Wissenschaft,
> Des Menschen allerhöchste Kraft,
> Lass nur in Blend- und Zauberwerken
> Dich von dem Lügengeist bestärken,
> So hab' ich dich schon unbedingt.

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[1] L. Nohl, *Mosaik.*

[2] J. Pietsch, *Goethe als Freimaurer*, Leipzig, 1880.

might be the very thoughts of the Queen of Night. Allusion has already been made to Ariel's description of the sun:—

> Horchet! horcht! dem Sturm der Horen,
> Tönend wird für Geistes-Ohren
> Schon der neue Tag geboren.
> Felsenthore knarren rasselnd,
> Phöbus Räder rollen prasselnd,
> Welch' Getöse bringt das Licht!
> Es trommetet, es posaunet,
> Auge blinzt und Ohr erstaunet,
> Unerhörtes hört sich nicht.

It was, of course, Mozart of whom Goethe was thinking when he said to Eckermann in 1827 that his ideal composer for the second part of "Faust" must be a man who had lived long in Italy, so as to unite a German temperament with Italian style. Unfortunately the only composer who seemed to him to fulfil these conditions was—Meyerbeer. To us the ideal composer for the second part of "Faust" would undoubtedly have been Beethoven; but Beethoven was probably not Italian enough for Goethe, and there can be little doubt that each would have found the style of the other's latest period utterly unintelligible.

Beethoven, however, like Goethe, was profoundly influenced by "Die Zauberflöte," and his unconscious commentaries on it are often very illuminating. How intensely real its characters were to him may be seen in his letters, with their constant reference to Schindler as Papageno, and to his sister-in-law as the Queen of Night. His brother Carl died in 1815, leaving him guardian of his son; the widow and Beethoven were bitter enemies, as he would never allow her to see her son if he could help it, believing her to be a

woman of bad character. On 28 July, 1816, he writes to his nephew's schoolmaster:—

"With regard to the Queen of Night, things will go on as before, and even if Carl should undergo his operation at your house, seeing that he will be poorly for a time, hence more sensitive and excitable, she must not be allowed to see him; all the less, seeing Carl might easily recall former impressions, a thing we can't allow. . . . Meanwhile I have not treated her this time like a Sarastro, but answered her like a Sultan." [1]

She was perpetually making attempts to visit her son, or to correspond with him secretly. Another letter of 1816 mentions "The Queen of Night, who never ceases to direct the full force of her vindictive disposition against me."

The purely musical influence of "Die Zauberflöte" is to be seen very clearly in "The Mount of Olives." Beethoven's one attempt at oratorio is not among his greatest works. It is even less known than it deserves to be, mainly because it does not conform to the popular type. But it is evident that Beethoven himself was not clear as to how to treat the subject. The libretto is a feeble German imitation of the old-fashioned Italian oratorio, in which the characters are made to sing recitatives and formal arias, much as they do in the libretti which Dr. Morell wrote for Handel. Haydn's "Tobias" is a similar example, and the recent revival of it showed that music which was beautiful and expressive when set to formal Italian was made to sound absurd and frivolous by adapting to it modern German or English

[1] *The Letters of Ludwig van Beethoven*, translated by J. S. Shedlock, London, 1909.

words that demanded a romantic rather than a classical style of interpretation. The "Mount of Olives" suffers in the same way from having the faults of both periods. Beethoven, looking, we may suppose, for a model of religious drama, naturally chose "Die Zauberflöte." The first aria sung by Jesus is unmistakably developed out of Tamino's first entrance; the Seraph seems imitated from the Queen of Night; the first chorus of soldiers suggests the Three Ladies. As the work progresses, however, the influence of Mozart disappears, and that of Handel becomes more noticeable.

"Prometheus" (composed in 1800) had already shown how well Beethoven remembered "Die Zauberflöte"; the concluding chorus of Mozart's opera must have suggested that theme in the finale of "Prometheus" which Beethoven used again for a set of pianoforte variations, and for the last movement of the "Eroica" symphony. In 1801 Schikaneder opened his new theatre, the "Theater an der Wien," and negotiated with Beethoven for music to his "Alexander," a spectacular opera with which the building was magnificently inaugurated. The music was however written eventually by Teyber, and Beethoven used up his sketches for "Fidelio." An announcement was made in June 1803, that he had arranged to write an opera for Schikaneder, but it was not until 1805 that he began to work at "Fidelio." The theatre really belonged to Zitterbarth, a rich merchant, but Schikaneder had kept the management in his own hands. His extravagant productions exceeded all limits, and as they only earned public

[1] "The Mount of Olives," although published in 1811 as Op. 85, was written in 1801.

contempt and ridicule, Zitterbarth sold the theatre in February 1804 to Baron von Braun, manager of the court theatre, who for some years had been Schikaneder's bitterest enemy. He now dismissed Schikaneder on the spot, but found himself obliged to re-engage him as director in order to prevent a complete collapse of the undertaking. The offer to Beethoven was renewed, and during the spring and summer of 1805 "Fidelio" was written, the first performance taking place on November 20.

A sketch-book of Beethoven's is in existence in which fragments of "Fidelio" are mixed up with extracts from "Die Zauberflöte" and Cherubini's "Les deux Journées." But we do not find any very obvious parallels between Beethoven's opera and Mozart's. The more apparent influence is that of Cherubini; Mozart he had by this time absorbed completely into his musical system, whereas Cherubini's style was comparatively new to him. But it was certainly from "Die Zauberflöte" that he had learned how to plan a finale and how to set German words in a dramatic spirit. Pizarro has a touch of Monostatos in his duet with Rocco, and something of the Queen in his aria. The final choruses trace their origin to the choruses in "Die Zauberflöte," especially to that which ends the first act; here we can see the germ of all Beethoven's characteristically merciless writing for chorus—it foreshadows not merely "Fidelio" but the Choral Fantasia the Choral Symphony, and even the Mass in D. Both composers—Mozart here, Beethoven almost always—seem to conceive the chorus not as a crowd of actual human beings, but as a host of disembodied voices, ideal and infinite. What the trumpets had been to Bach

and Handel, what the trombones had been to Beethoven and Mozart themselves, this the voice of the chorus was to be, vaster than any instruments, not merely in physical strength, but still more essentially in the moral force of its utterance.

We are at the turn of the century. Tamino and Pamina have grown up into real man and woman, Florestan and Leonora—a change such as takes place in Siegfried and Brünnhilde when they leave their mountain summit and descend to the life of earth, except that Mozart's figures seem to be more ideal and Beethoven's more real than Wagner's. There is a strange sense of connection between the two operas; we feel that "Die Zauberflöte" stands much closer to "Fidelio" than to "Don Giovanni" or "Così fan tutte," and that "Fidelio" stands much closer to "Die Zauberflöte" than to "Der Freischütz" and "Euryanthe." It was the Mozart of "Die Zauberflöte" who struck the death-blow to the music of the eighteenth century. A later age thought him the typical exponent of the *rococo* period: his contemporary Naumann knew better when he called him a musical *sans-culotte*. Yet neither he nor even Beethoven can be classed as romantics; their very greatness lay in the fact that they expressed the humanity of their own time, not the sentimental hankering after the emotions of the past. Tamino and Pamina are in music what Faust and Helen are in poetry, though in the opera it is Tamino who is Italian and classical, Pamina who is German and almost romantic. Euphorion has been said by some to represent Byron, by others to represent Goethe himself; but if he was really intended to represent any actual person of that time,

could there be any better incarnation of him than Mozart?

It is only natural that Mozart's most completely German opera should have been less popular in other countries than its Italian predecessors. Moreover, even in Germany it is probably the case that "Die Zauberflöte" has never attained the celebrity of "Don Giovanni." "Don Giovanni" had the merit of a straightforward if not very well-constructed plot, and a subject that anybody could understand. Moreover, the romantic critics took it up with enthusiasm. Italy, of course, never would listen to Mozart after the days of his boyish triumphs there; France and Germany found that what had been intended as an Italian *opera buffa* was more exciting as a romantic tragedy of passion and superstition. "Die Zauberflöte" pleased German audiences for the less dignified of its national characteristics, and the audiences of other countries voted it nonsense set to pretty tunes with great opportunities for a *prima donna*. We can hardly wonder when we read the stock Italian translation, and note the horrible mutilations which it imposed upon the music.

To English audiences of to-day "Die Zauberflöte" is practically an unknown work. London has seen it twice only (once in Italian, once in English) during the last twenty years. There is at any rate one advantage for us in England; we have no traditions about it to hamper our judgment. In Germany the opera is performed with fair regularity, but seldom well. A German manager is confronted by the difficulty that on the one hand the libretto requires drastic alterations, while on the other its very absurdities have become so endeared by childish

associations that it is hopeless to touch them. Various re-arrangements of the plot have been tried, and the wildest extravagance lavished on scenery. A recent performance at Berlin transplanted the whole action from Egypt to Persia, and it was officially stated that the management desired to eliminate all political and moral allusions. From what has been previously said in these pages it will, however, be clear that it is only this ethical element in the opera that makes it an organic whole. To go through the opera taking the libretto simply at its face value is to justify all the unintelligent criticisms of the last hundred years.

Yet it is equally clear that a mere historical explanation will not satisfy us. We are no longer concerned with Maria Theresa or Joseph II, and are content to leave both Freemasons and Jesuits to their own concerns. We have to find out (and the problem before us is one that recurs whenever operas of more than a certain antiquity are revived) what is the essential force that gave such undying vitality to the music, to let that fundamental idea be our guide, and to disregard, if necessary, many things which originally were regarded as essential, but which we now see to have been accidents of time and place. The vast majority of operas, good or bad, in all languages, and at all times, have been based on the passions of love and jealousy, in a more or less crude form. It is noticeable that in both "Die Zauberflöte" and "Fidelio" the second of these motives is practically absent, and the first is presented in a form very different from the usual operatic type. "Fidelio" shows us not those conventional puppets whose only semblance to humanity is to be found in

their susceptibility to the various phases of passion—such puppets as are seen in their most charming guise in "Così fan tutte"—but real characters, for whom love is a means of self-expression. It is true that both the two leading characters are phases of Beethoven himself; but musical composition itself is after all self-expression, and a great opera is only written by a man who makes his own personality felt in every note.

It is by working backwards from Florestan and Leonora that we shall arrive at understanding the hero and heroine of "Die Zauberflöte." Florestan and Leonora are real people, existing in a real place, moving in actual time. Tamino and Pamina are ideal figures, living only in imagination, and passing through the experience of a lifetime in the course of a few bars of music. Tamino, like Euphorion, may be regarded as Mozart himself; it is certainly as reasonable to say this as to say with many writers that Mozart painted himself as Don Giovanni—reasonable, because Tamino is not only Mozart, but Everyman. We see him fly in terror from a monster of his dreams, terrified, because for the first time in his life he has felt himself to be alone. The Three Ladies, equal to all ordinary emergencies, take possession of his inexperience. They have no imagination; they live only in the practical daily round of the social world, ruled by the Queen, and content to obey her conventions without question. Tamino is young and romantic; he has not been allowed to think, but only to feel. Any woman is a goddess to him; the mere portrait of Pamina and the story of her captivity are enough to set him on fire, and we

cannot blame him for being imposed upon by the flashing and mysterious magnificence of the Queen. Moreover, he has learnt something even from the Ladies, something of which they themselves have not realized the full potentialities. They have provided him with a slave, Papageno; they have taught him an accomplishment, music, symbolized by the magic flute; they have even awakened him to the dawning consciousness of a new but elusive power within himself which is made visible for us in the figures of the Three Genii. Silence, patience, perseverance—even in the realms of the Queen and her Ladies those words meant wisdom, though it were only *savoir faire.*

He arrives at the temple. He is a prince, with all those privileges, hereditary and acquired, which his rank confers; and shall anyone dare say to him "Stand back"? But he has forgotten Nature, he has not been allowed to know Reason, and he must wait before he can acquire Wisdom. The priest who meets him on the threshold is not what he expected to see; he had meant to force an entrance and proceed like a brave knight to deeds of chivalry. Yet he finds neither fair lady nor dragon—only a philosopher, who neither admits him nor refuses him admittance. He turns away despondent; his old ideals have been shattered. But he has begun to think for himself instead of accepting the ideas of the world. Meanwhile the slave, whom as a prince he very properly despised, has been cleverer than his master. He has found the fair lady, and found her to be just a simple child, ready enough to make friends, and almost as free from artificial ideas as

himself. She is guarded by a brute under the name of authority; but Papageno is a child of nature,[1] and the word authority means nothing to him, as the word nature means nothing to Monostatos. Yet it is not easy to escape from authority, when authority has no basis of reason; Papageno and Pamina run away but are soon caught again. However, even Papageno has learnt something from the Ladies, for it is of incongruity that laughter is born. The magic bells have the gift of setting all who hear them laughing, and it is by this means that Papageno and Pamina get rid of their tormentors. Tamino, on the other hand, is captured, and brought before Sarastro. At the moment indeed he has no eyes for anyone but the fair object of his dreams, who hastens in all simplicity to meet him. Here again it is brute authority that intervenes; the philosopher looks on unconcerned. He has foreseen it from the beginning; but the young lovers must undergo a period of preparation if they are to be worthy of each other as full-grown man and woman.

Now begins the ordeal. Music and laughter have been taken away; the prince and slave are left to meditate in darkness. Prince and slave they are no more; they have become merely friends, each realizing that he has something to receive from the other and something to give him. The Ladies reappear, and seek to distract them from their new course, but Tamino remains firm, resisting threats and blandishments alike; he knows now that wisdom and independence are better than submission to the

[1] Tiersot rather happily calls Papageno "une sorte de Parsifal comique."

Queen's gracious approval, and that love can be a nobler if a more tranquil passion than it had been painted for him outside.

Pamina when we first see her is a child, with a child's simplicity and a child's seriousness. Yet she has learnt more under Sarastro's care than she would ever have done from the Queen. She still believes in her mother, until the shock comes which is to make her think for herself, as Tamino has been made to do. It is when the Queen bids her kill Sarastro that she realizes that she must give up her mother altogether if she is to work out her own life. She has, in fact, passed through the same ordeal that Tamino has endured.

The flute is restored to Tamino: he has shown that he will not misuse the gift. The lovers proceed to the second test; it is more severe than the first, for here each suffers in the other's presence, and it is that very presence that causes the suffering. Tamino must not allow even love to distract him from his ideals; Pamina must learn that for him love is only a part of life, while for her it is the whole. Each test brings its reward—first the recovery of the flute, then admission to the presence of the initiated. The man's conviction of his duty deepens; the woman, lacking his intellectual strength, feels that he is lost to her, because he is seeking something that she cannot understand. She gives way to despair, and it is only when she has begun to reason calmly again that she realizes that her love is not complete until it has included sacrifice. Not until then can she join her lover, to pass through those ordeals which under the symbolism of fire and water represent the experi-

ences of a lifetime. It is then that they learn the full power of the magic flute, dispassionate, equable and gentle:—

> the Dorian mood
> Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised
> To height of noblest temper heroes old
> Arming to battle, and instead of rage
> Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved
> With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
> Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
> With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
> Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
> From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
> Breathing united force with fixed thought,
> Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
> Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil.

It is the wonderful sense of growth and development that makes "Die Zauberflöte" comparable only to the operas of Wagner. In all his operas Mozart is remarkable for his power of characterization; but in none of them before this, except to a slight extent in "Idomeneo," did he make a single character show a gradual maturing of personality such as we see in Tamino and Pamina. It was indeed hardly possible to do so within the limits of conventional drama. But "Die Zauberflöte," although it starts as a conventional opera, very soon departs from all precedent. Yet its development is so logical and inevitable that it is only when we look through the table of contents that we realize that hero and heroine have no more than one aria apiece! It is only when we read through the libretto carefully that we realize that hero and heroine have practically no love-scenes. Like Florestan and Leonora, they have taken love for granted. They are both so essen-

tially truthful and sincere, so devoid of all self-torture on the one hand or coquetry on the other, that there is no necessity to play variations on the eternal operatic theme. Tamino's ardour sees beyond passion, and Pamina, even if her intellect cannot grasp his ideals, is content to follow him. She has well been compared to Miranda and Sarastro to Prospero[1]; Tamino is indeed not far removed from Ferdinand, and there is a curious similarity between the direct and yet reticent understanding of the two pairs of lovers.[2] We might even find something of Ariel in the Three Genii; but there is no need to work out the allegory in every detail. Each hearer must use his own imagination and interpret the opera for himself.

[1] R. A. Streatfeild, *Modern Music and Musicians*, 1906.

[2] There is just a possibility that Giesecke may have known "The Tempest." Schikaneder's repertory included some Shakespeare plays, and Giesecke himself wrote a parody of "Hamlet."

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION—MOZART AND THE MODERN STAGE

In the foregoing chapters I have tried to present Mozart's operas to the imagination of the reader as they appeared on the stage in Mozart's own day. In preparing them for modern performance, it may not be always desirable to reproduce exactly every detail of the original interpretation. What has, of course, generally happened is that stage-managers, actors, and conductors have little by little added successive touches at different times during the last hundred years, and the body of tradition with regard to performance has come to include a number of absurdities for which the original reasons have now been completely forgotten. If Mozart's operas are to be presented to English audiences as living works of art, a fresh start must be made; we must return to the original librettos and scores, and do the best we can to breathe fresh life into them, just as if they had never been put on the stage at all. The value of a historical investigation is that it will explain to us the real significance of many things that have in our days become almost obsolete; it may even lead us to the conclusion that some of these things had a value of their own which may be turned to account at the present day, if we are careful to preserve and reanimate the spirit rather than the letter of them. Obviously, the most important of all the half-forgotten

principles of Mozart's method of composition is the art of singing, which, in spite of a certain number of great singers, is still in a very decadent condition. The fault lies not merely with those who sing, but with those who write and those who listen as well. There are naturally some singers, and some audiences too, who never carry their appreciation of singing further than the purely physiological stage ; and there are very few indeed who carry it beyond the stage of the appeal to associations. It is easy enough to account for this ; the human voice at its best makes a greater physiological appeal than any instrument, and just because it is human, its power of appeal to associations is, of course, overwhelming. Serious musicians, being constantly confronted with manifestations of these principles which are blatantly inartistic in character, have too lightly said in their haste that all singers are either fools or charlatans. Since the days of Corelli or earlier, the instrumentalists have learnt so much from the singer of the past that a modern violinist, even a modern pianist, can, in practice, make so vivid an appeal to the emotions, and in some cases to the intellect as well, that we willingly delude ourselves into believing either that the physiological appeal of the instrumentalist is fully equal to that of the singer, if not greater, or, as some writers have maintained with a great show of moral rectitude, that the physiological appeal is in itself demoralizing and degrading. There is, however, no fundamental reason why the singer should not be as capable of intellectual appreciation, and as capable of intellectual interpretation, as any pianist or fiddler ; in fact, in the days of Corelli the singers were undoubtedly the most intellectual of all types of musi-

cians, so that the most intellectual type of music in that period was actually written for them and for them only. And if the singer can but hold his own against the instrumentalist in his power of musical reasoning, how much greater will be his power of interpretation, when we consider the enormous auxiliary force of emotional and physiological appeal which he has at his command! The case for the instrumentalists, however, has been very much strengthened by the fact that in modern days the more serious type of singer has deliberately cultivated the appeal to associations, to the detriment of the physiological appeal. The tendency of the "advanced" singer is not to sing, but to declaim, to make singing sound as much like speech as possible; and the "advanced" composers of a generation ago, following, as they thought, the example of Wagner, encouraged this vice by writing music which was only intelligible when declaimed in this rhetorical way. It was, of course, a necessary phase of transition; it taught us the musical value of our own language, and by setting an exaggerated value on "diction" did really do much to encourage a better style of enunciation from singers, and a more careful setting of notes to syllables from composers. Yet why need we have had to wait for a Wagner and his imitators to teach us the lesson, when we could have learnt it equally well from our own composers of the Elizabethan era? I will not suggest that we might have learnt it from Mozart or Scarlatti, because it is obviously impossible for us to learn Italian properly until we have mastered our own language.

And here we come to another point which is of the greatest importance in connection with the perform-

ance of Mozart's operas, or indeed of any operas by any composer. If opera is to be made really intelligible, it must be sung in a language with which the audience is familiar. Those who speak and write German as fluently as they do their mother tongue may be able to enjoy Wagner in the original, and will naturally regret the inevitable damage that is done by even the best of translations; but for the majority of English people opera must undoubtedly be in English. It must be admitted that most operatic translations are simply disgraceful; there are few that are even tolerable, few that even maintain a consistently good style for as much as a single page. The plan was adopted recently, by way of improvement, of leaving the arias as they were—possibly to save the singer the trouble of learning new words—and rewriting the dialogué in the style of musical comedy. The result, needless to say, was disastrous; it ought to have been obvious to any translator that, in a Mozart opera, recitative is on the whole easier to translate than aria, not so much because of the difficulty of the rhymes as on account of the fact that the words of an aria require a real sense of poetry, expressed in a very terse and epigrammatic shape, which must further be capable of fitting different kinds of musical phrases with the most exact precision. It must be insisted upon clearly that the words of an aria have to make sense just as much as the words of a recitative. If they are set properly, they will not be obliterated by the music (assuming that the singer sings them properly), but will, on the contrary, be emphasized by it. The greatest care must be taken to make the words follow the melodic outline in the most natural way; if this is adequately done, the

words will be easy to sing, and they will be heard distinctly without any difficulty. Often enough it is the case that when words of songs are smudged over and lost, the fault lies not with the singer but with the composer, or in certain cases with the translator, who, if he is to do his work in a satisfactory way, must himself have something of the composer's instinct. The difficulty in translating recitative is to find words that are simple and obvious without having ridiculous and commonplace associations. Poetical words and recondite words of any kind must be studiously avoided in all parts of an opera libretto; the music is so quickly past and gone that no listener has ever time to stop and think over the meaning of an unusual expression. In recitative, too, it must be remembered that the best translator is terribly at the mercy of his singers. There are, for instance, several pages of recitative in "Don Giovanni" which have been admirably translated by Lady Macfarren[1] into English that is natural and idiomatic without being trivial or vulgar, provided that the singers can deliver the words with the rapidity and ease that would be required as a matter of course from actors of ordinary efficiency; but if they are reverently vocalized in the traditional manner of British oratorio, they merely make the whole opera ridiculous instead of genuinely humorous and witty.

With regard to what is generally called the "production" of the operas, the first thing to do is to aim at simplicity and directness as much as possible. We have always to remember that British audiences are not yet really accustomed to opera. We need not waste time in lamenting over the fact; it has at least

[1] Novello's edition.

this advantage, that they come to opera with a more or less open mind, and are therefore much more susceptible to its highest appeal than a public which is *blasé* with the operatic tradition of centuries. Our first duty then in putting Mozart on the stage must be to make the audience understand the essential aim of musical as opposed to non-musical drama, and we must leave out or at any rate minimize the "machines and dancing," which Dryden considered so essential to opera, until audiences are sufficiently at home in the necessary conventions of opera to be able to put these things into their proper places instead of regarding them as the most characteristic feature of the form. Simplification, however, does not imply baldness or ugliness of treatment. We must eliminate the unnecessary in such a way that the audience may see how the essentials gain in beauty as well as in directness from being divested of subsidiary distractions. The modern stage-manager will find that one way in which to secure the attention of the audience is to emphasize the essential continuity of an opera by making one scene succeed another without break. In some cases this presents technical difficulties, and especially perhaps in the three operas in which continuity is of the most urgent importance—"Don Giovanni," "Così fan tutte" and "Die Zauberflöte." The moment a curtain falls and lights are turned up in the auditorium, the audience begins to remember its own existence. The listeners are back in their workaday world again; they talk, they discuss the singers, they draw each other's attention to the obvious absurdities of operatic convention. The musician's spell is broken, and the work of enchantment has to

be begun all over again. This must be prevented at all costs, even at the sacrifice of some scenic effect. It is better to act an opera of this kind in front of plain draperies than to run so grave a risk in order to obtain a realism which deceives nobody, and only prevents the spectators from using their own imaginations. Not that I wish to advocate the exclusive use of plain draperies as backgrounds to Mozart. There are many scenes in which they would be most unsuitable, although a judicious employment of them will in others be definitely effective.

It is needless to say that it will not be desirable to treat all of Mozart's operas on the same general lines. Each has its own atmosphere, and we must take care that that definite atmosphere is made clear to the audience from the first, and maintained consistently to the end. "Idomeneo" presents many points of resemblance to "Aida," but there is an essential difference of style. Both deal with a more or less conventional operatic story, both treat it in a definitely operatic manner, and both set it against a background of spectacular antiquity. But whereas Verdi's opera, in spite of its forty years of popularity, is still more or less in touch with modern audiences, Mozart's belongs definitely to the eighteenth century. "Idomeneo" inevitably demands a certain amount of spectacle and a certain formality of design; the important thing is to see that the spectacle is always subservient to and illustrative of the music, that the formality is always consistent, and never allowed to degenerate into awkwardness and rigidity. It is absurd to attempt either a realistic representation of it or that peculiar academic style of decoration which

is now considered suitable for revivals of Greek tragedy. The moment the curtain rises, we must feel ourselves to be back in the atmosphere of eighteenth-century opera, and it will be the business of the producer to seize upon the characteristic principles of the form, be they decorative, musical or dramatic, and make them consistently clear to us. That is indeed the crowning difficulty of all artistic interpretation: the interpreter may have understood his creative artist, he may have made up his own mind in every detail about his intention, but there still remains for him what is in certain cases the hardest task of all, the task of conveying his ideas to the minds of his audience. There will then be in every opera of Mozart's two things which must be made clear: the composer's point of view towards the opera, and the essential dramatic principle of the particular story presented. It is this latter that is the real link between Mozart and ourselves. If the drama itself can make no appeal to us, it is useless to put the opera on the stage—it will be at best only an archæological reconstruction, fit only for the illustration of a lecture on musical history. On the other hand, if the historical point of view be neglected, we shall inevitably miss the greater part of that fine psychological detail which is the most characteristic expression of Mozart's genius.

The same difficulty will confront us in the four comic operas. Of these "Die Entführung" is undoubtedly the most difficult, because, as has been already pointed out, it is not consistent with itself. The technical difficulties of "Don Giovanni" are great, but half the battle is won when the producer has made up his mind to exhibit it in the spirit in

which Da Ponte and Mozart intended it. "Die Entführung" will always require a certain amount of ingenuity to mask its incongruities of style, and the greatest difficulty of all will be to disguise the fact that its story is almost entirely devoid of real human interest.

The three Italian operas may really be said to act themselves, as long as they are acted by the light of common-sense, once granted their characteristic point of view. They demand of course a combination of realism and convention the exact balance of which it is very difficult to secure. Over-realistic acting and the exaggeration of "by-play" are faults quite as grave as the old-fashioned stiff operatic manner. One of the gravest faults in producing operas is to try to pretend that an opera is not an opera at all, but a play. Music requires from an audience an attention so much more close than ordinary speech that all subsidiary distractions must be as carefully avoided as they would be in a play written in a deliberately artificial style of verse. It is clear that the great ensembles must always be treated with a certain conventionality of stage-arrangement; but it is quite possible to avoid dropping into lifelessness, and it is important to remember that the conventionality of the ensemble will become much more painfully unreal if the lively scenes are allowed to degenerate into vulgar horse-play. This warning applies most of all to "Così fan tutte," which demands the most delicate grace of handling from beginning to end, even in the most ridiculous of its situations.

Of all operas the one which gains most by simplification is "Die Zauberflöte." Schikaneder,

as we have seen, produced it as a mixture of clowning and spectacular effect such as we are accustomed to see in a Christmas pantomime; but a treatment of this kind is fatal in presenting the opera to a modern audience. Nor is it desirable in this case to emphasize the historical aspect of the opera too much. "Die Zauberflöte" is of all Mozart's operas the one which is least marked by the characteristics of a particular period. It is for all time, and seems to have no connection with any definite place. Its Egypt is not geographical, as in "Aida." In Verdi's opera we want to see the Nile and the Pyramids constantly in the background; in Mozart's, Egypt is as much a fairyland as Judea was to the old Italian painters. For our day it is the mystical significance of the work which requires to be brought constantly into the foreground, and this aspect of the opera will only be obscured by an exaggeration of scenic effects.

There is no doubt that it is Wagner and Verdi who have taught us to appreciate the real value of Mozart as a dramatic composer; it is in the spirit of Verdi that Mozart must be sung; it is in the spirit of Wagner that he must be played and put on the stage. Verdi more than any other composer will teach us modern musicians the intellectual beauty of pure singing, especially in his middle period ("Un ballo in maschera," "Aida" and the Requiem) during which his marvellous command of harmony helps us to understand the logic of that earlier melodious language which we to our shame have now almost completely forgotten. The Verdi of "Otello" and "Falstaff" has also his lessons to teach us; but they are lessons which we shall not

be capable of understanding until we have saturated our minds with the style which preceded them. From Wagner we must learn to grasp the conception of an opera as a musical whole—orchestra, voices and stage effects all combining to form one immense and uninterrupted symphony, in which every detail has to be fitted in exactly at its proper place and time. And it is therefore eminently desirable that Mozart's operas should take their place in this country as works which are accessible to all lovers of music and drama by means of frequent performances in our own language, because it is from Mozart more than any other composer that we can learn in the easiest way to understand operatic ideals at their best. Mozart will furnish us with a permanent standard for opera, just as Beethoven does for the symphony and Handel for oratorio, even though all three belong to an age that is far remote from our own. It is indeed this very remoteness that gives the standard its permanence, for we have now reached a stage when no composer in his senses would try to write an opera in the style of Mozart, any more than he would write a symphony in the manner of Beethoven or a Handelian oratorio; these standards are safe against unintelligent copying, while to those who will study them patiently and intelligently they will yield up their real secrets, the principles of musical reasoning on which their construction is based.

We come back thus to what was indicated in the first chapter of this book—that music is intelligible only by the light of reason, and it is therefore as necessary to work by this light in the domain of opera as it is in any other form of drama. This

principle is one which applies to composers even more than to audiences. The first duty of a composer of opera is to make us feel throughout his work that music is the normal language of all the characters on the stage; his next and equally important duty is to make his opera a consistent organic musical whole from beginning to end. It is in these respects that Mozart's genius is most strikingly apparent. He has no need for the tricks of the second-rate composer—for "local colour," for sudden *tremolos*, for harsh successions of inconsequent chords, for declamatory and descriptive effects; in a word, for any of those methods by which music leaves off being music and pretends to be something else. Such things always impress a moderately cultivated audience, and distract attention from the fact that the opera as a whole may have no logical musical unity. Indeed, no small success has sometimes been made by operas which have made use of various types of physiological and associational appeal without the presentation of a single really musical and original thought. Such works, however, belong to the domain not of art but of commerce.

Moreover, composers possessed of a higher artistic standard have often failed to produce good work simply from not knowing what they were really aiming at. What they have in practice aimed at has been the external imitation of those effects which they have seen to be conspicuously successful in Wagner or Verdi, but they have not always been able to grasp the scheme of an opera as a whole, and so have not understood what Wagner or Verdi were aiming at themselves. Hence comes uncertainty of intention, which is more fatal in

opera than in any other branch of music. If a composer does not know himself what he means, he certainly cannot expect an unsophisticated audience to discover it. It must, moreover, be understood that what Wagner and Verdi aimed at in the past is not necessarily a suitable aim in all its details for our musical dramatists of the present day; nevertheless, a careful study of their aims will certainly be fruitful in the discovery of sound principles, on which the methods of our modern technique may be grafted. And by way of preliminary to the investigation of these composers and their ideals, there can be no better study, for composers, singers, librettists and audiences alike—and we may add that no study can be more delightful as well as profitable—than the operas of Mozart.

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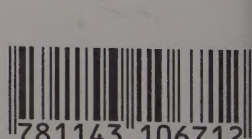

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